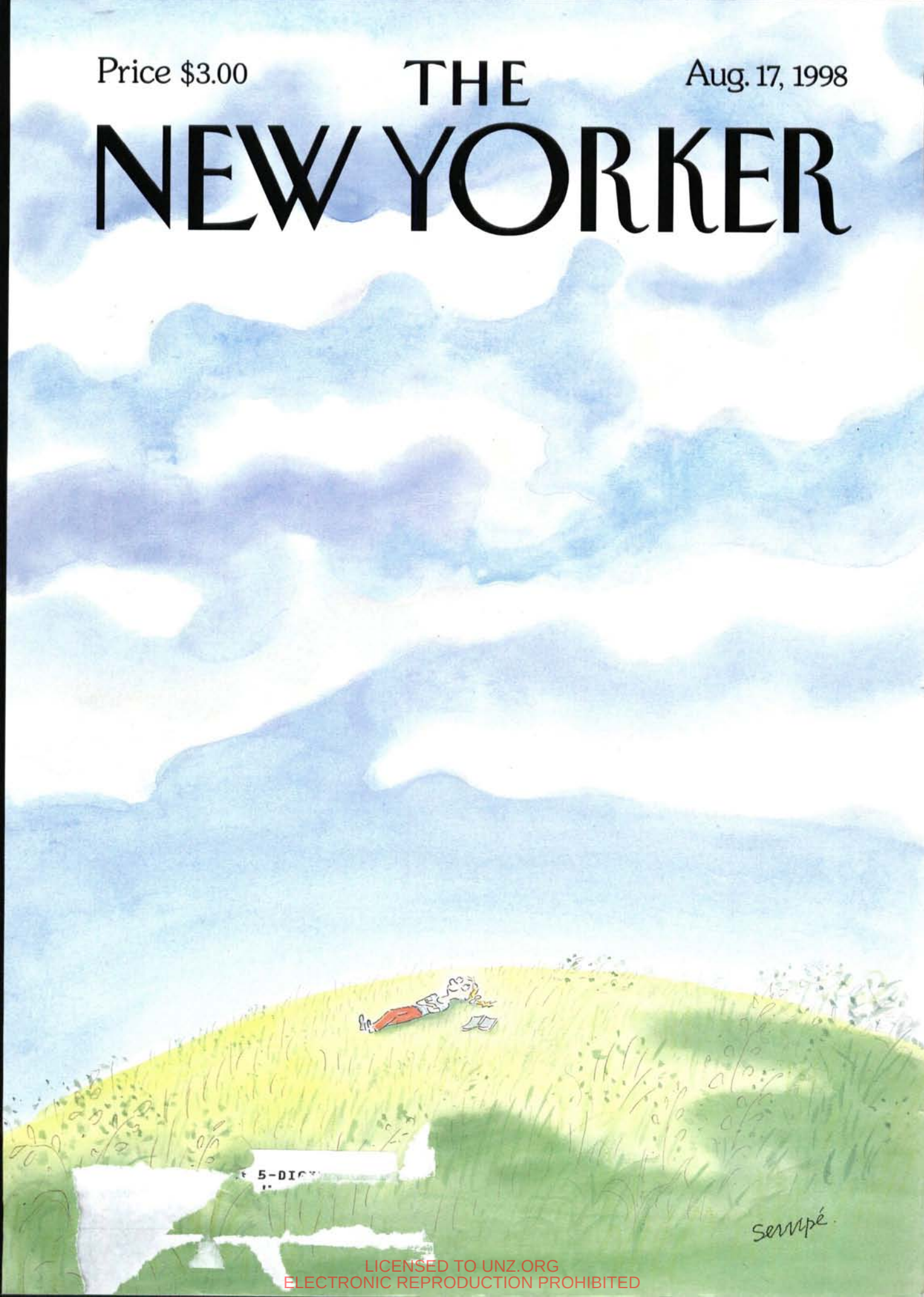


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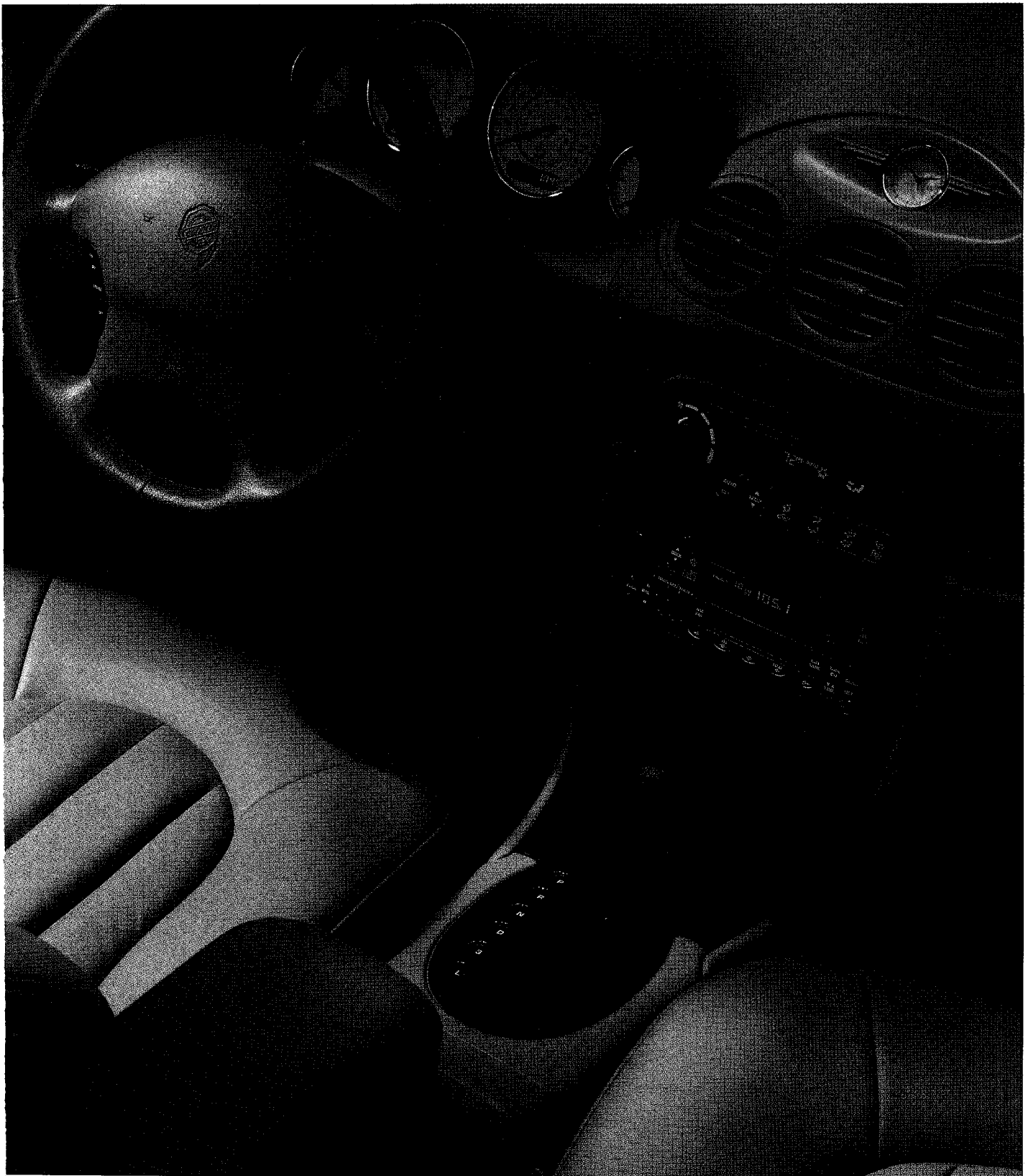
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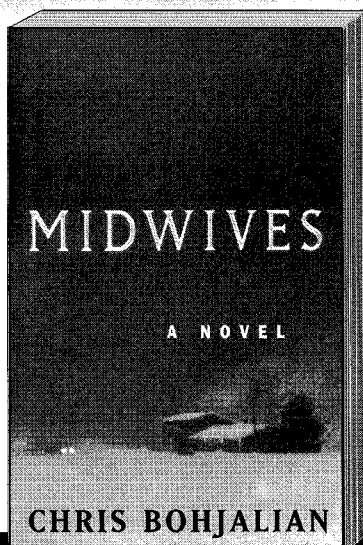
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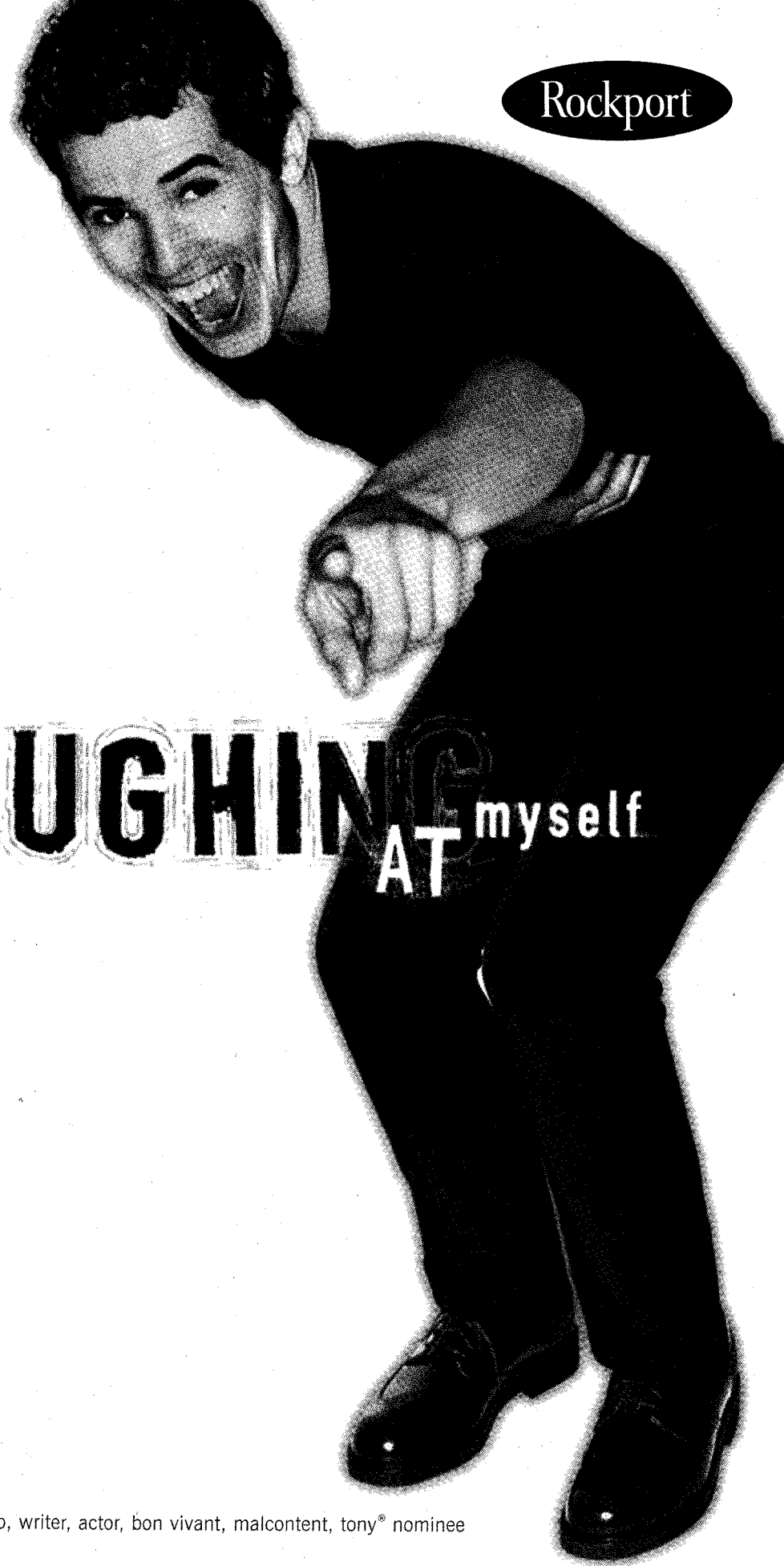
THE NEW YORKER

AUGUST 17, 1998

COMMENT What It's About	<i>Hendrik Hertzberg</i>	4
It can't <i>not</i> be about sex.		
THE MAIL		7
GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN		8
THE TALK OF THE TOWN		29
William Styron distances himself from the Modern Library's list; Bob Packwood feels Bill Clinton's pain; etc.		
DEPARTMENTS		
The Sporting Scene Front Running	<i>Roger Angell</i>	32
The Yankees are doing everything right—not just on the field but in the clubhouse.		
Annals of Finance Pricking the Bubble	<i>John Cassidy</i>	37
History suggests that a stock-market crash is likely. If it happens, can the Fed's Alan Greenspan stave off a recession?		
A CRITIC AT LARGE The Trouble with Lenny	<i>David Denby</i>	42
Part artist and part entertainer, Leonard Bernstein showed us the value of ambivalence.		
SKETCHBOOK Off Duty	<i>Michael Roberts</i>	49
ANNALS OF BEHAVIOR Do Parents Matter?	<i>Malcolm Gladwell</i>	54
So much for "nature vs. nurture": According to a bold new theory, psychology has missed what really shapes our children.		
FICTION "Real Estate"	<i>Lorrie Moore</i>	66
Home is where the heart breaks.		
THE CRITICS		
Books A new translation of Gogol's "Collected Tales"	<i>James Wood</i>	75
Briefly Noted		77
The Theatre "The Cider House Rules"	<i>John Lahr</i>	80
The Current Cinema Brian De Palma's "Snake Eyes"	<i>Daphne Merkin</i>	82
POEMS		
"Distinctions"	<i>Josephine Jacobsen</i>	34
"The Mercy"	<i>Philip Levine</i>	53
CROSSWORD 8 x 10 Cryptic No. 55		83
SHOUTS & MURMURS Talking Points	<i>Andy Borowitz</i>	84
COVER	<i>Afternoon Dreams, by J. J. Sempé</i>	
DRAWINGS	<i>Jack Ziegler, Danny Shanahan, Mike Twohy, Mick Stevens, J. B. Handelsman, Michael Maslin, Victoria Roberts, William Hamilton, Mort Gerberg, Tom Cheney, Leo Cullum, Chon Day, Bruce Eric Kaplan, Peter Steiner, Roz Chast, Frank Cotham, Robert Mankoff, Marisa Acocella, Arnie Levin</i>	

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WHAT IT'S ABOUT

Well, it sure ain't about the opposite of sex.

LAST week, the government of our city began enforcing a zoning ordinance designed to curb porn shops, topless bars, strip clubs, and other pillars of the "adult-entertainment" industry. Under the ordinance, if a business establishment (a) is situated within five hundred feet of a church, school, home, or day-care center and (b) offers merchandise or activity more than forty per cent of which consists of smutty videos, dirty books, battery-operated dildos, naked women dancing suggestively, and the like, then (c) Mayor Giuliani's vice squad can move in and padlock the place. As a result, the window displays at Show World Center, which for some twenty years has been Times Square's biggest and busiest business establishment of its kind, are now filled with T-shirts, plastic Statues of Liberty, and piles of suitcases. Inside, gloomy corridors are still lined with lockable booths in which hard-core videos can still be viewed for a quarter per minute. But the merchandise shelves now hold perfume, sunglasses, and Walkmans, and the pornography salesroom now includes a sizable "Non-Adult Section," which stocks such mainstream titles as "Pillow Talk," "F.I.S.T.," and "The Nutcracker." Whether all this has sufficed

to push Show World Center's inventory below the forty-per-cent threshold remains to be adjudicated. But the position of the establishment's attorneys is clear: Show World Center is not about sex. It's about luggage.

So much for the week's doings in the cultural capital. What of the political capital?

"It's not about sex," Barbara Olson, who is identified as a former federal prosecutor, said recently on one of many editions of CNN's "Larry King Live" devoted to the investigation by the Whitewater independent counsel of the relationship between the President and the former White House intern. "It's about the Constitution." The Constitution? How high-minded, and how preposterous. The whole ghastly business—Kenneth Starr's four-year investigation, the massive public distractions and ugly private humiliations, the eons of airtime and acres of newsprint, the forced testimony of Secret Service agents and legal advisers, the crowning grotesquerie of the stained dress—has come down to a bizarre quest for the answer to a single question: Did two consenting adults, Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky, have sex with each other? This is not a good question.

THE NEW YORKER, 20 WEST 43RD STREET, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10036. David Carey, publisher; Pamela Maffei McCarthy, senior vice-president/deputy editor; Pamela H. Older, senior vice-president/operations; David M. May, associate publisher; Brenda Saget, associate publisher; Peter Armour, vice-president/circulation director; Rhonda Pinzer Sherman, vice-president/special-projects director; Maurie Perl, vice-president/public-relations director; Robert A. Silverstone, vice-president/business manager; Devereux Chatillon, vice-president/general counsel; Susan Harrington, director of creative services; James Oates, director of marketing and planning; Stephanie Sandberg, director of promotion and events. For advertising inquiries, please call Gretel Schneider or Richard Skeen, advertising directors, at (212) 536-5400. THE NEW YORKER is not responsible for the return or loss of submissions, or for any damage or other injury to unsolicited manuscripts or artwork. Any submission of a manuscript or artwork must be accompanied by a self-addressed envelope of appropriate size, bearing adequate return postage. The magazine does not consider unsolicited photographs or transparencies. © 1998 by The New Yorker Magazine, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this periodical may be reproduced without the consent of THE NEW YORKER. The periodical's name and logo, and the various titles and headings herein, are registered trademarks of Advance Magazine Publishers, Inc., published through its division The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.

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A good question would be: Why is it surpassingly important to the public business of the United States and the world for that question to be asked, and, once asked, answered?

"It's not about sex, it's about lying," Alfred Regnery, the conservative book publisher, said on another Larry King program. No, it's about sex, and the kind of sex it's about—consensual but adulterous, furtive, and illicit—is by its nature incompatible with candor. To have sex of this kind is ipso facto to deceive, whether or not the deception is overt. Unless one is prepared to advocate open marriage—or, at least, to argue that adultery accompanied by press conference is somehow less reprehensible than adultery accompanied by discretion—the distinction is close to meaningless.

"This case and the investigation of Monica Lewinsky is not about sex. It's about perjury." That would be a former independent counsel named Joseph diGenova talking, also on CNN. If the President in his Paula Jones deposition did falsely deny an affair with Ms. Lewinsky, and if he makes the same denial in his August 17th testimony before Starr's grand jury, then he will indeed have lied under oath, twice. But he will have done so inside a kind of hermetically sealed experimental laboratory—a closed system consciously designed for no purpose except to maneuver him into committing a crime (and a singularly victimless crime at that). In terms of scale, the machinery that has been constructed to induce perjury stands in relation to the perjury it may or may not have induced as one of those enormous and expensive particle accelerators out West stands in relation to the trail of a neutrino.

"But the case is not about sex," said Tom Squitieri, a reporter for *USA Today*, on CNBC's "Equal Time." "It's about obstruction of justice." Then what, exactly, is the justice that has been obstructed? And what, exactly, is the injustice that has been done, and to whom, as a consequence of this hypothetical obstruction? Obstacles may well have been placed in the path of an unaccountable prosecutorial bureaucracy that for obscure reasons has developed a single-minded obsession with

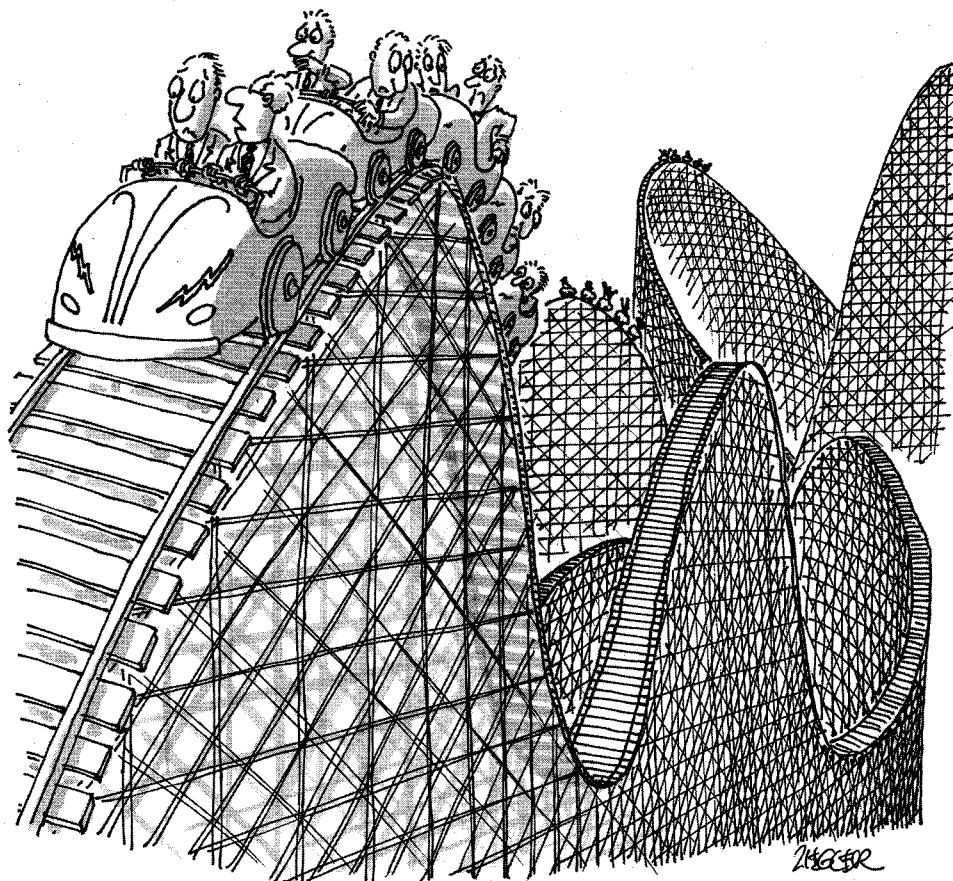
discovering at any cost, and publicizing in sniggering detail, precisely what private sexual acts were engaged in by the President and the former intern. One can only hope so. But in what sense does the promulgation of details of this kind constitute justice? Doesn't this particular exercise in salacious nosiness *deserve* to be obstructed?

"It's not about the sex," Alvin Cooper, a clinical psychologist at Stanford University, said in a newspaper interview. "It's about the meaning that people put on sex." Here, at last, we may be getting somewhere. If few Americans believe that adultery should automatically be grounds for removal from office, still fewer would deny that adultery is almost always a selfish and hurtful thing. If the President had sex with the intern, then he behaved very badly, both toward "that woman," as he ungallantly called Ms. Lewinsky, and toward his own family. (His behavior would have been worse, however, if he had not tried energetically to keep it from becoming a public spectacle). But if public officials are to be judged by the moral texture of their private lives, why limit the inquiry to binary determinations of Presidential

adultery? Why not extend it to all high officials, and why not widen its scope to include the broader context of familial and affectional life? A good place to begin, perhaps, would be with the scores of Senators and members of the House of Representatives who have been divorced. There is more than one way, after all, to be unkind.

"Apparently, it needs to be said repeatedly: The Monica Lewinsky-Bill Clinton investigation is not about sex," an important metropolitan newspaper, the *Chicago Sun-Times*, editorialized a few days ago. Well, it has been said repeatedly. Indeed, it has been said not only repeatedly but also ceaselessly, unremittingly, over and over again, and often—redundantly, in a word. And, if repetition could make a thing true, then it would be most emphatically and wonderfully true that the investigation of the relationship between the President and the former intern is not about sex. It would also be true that purchasers of *Playboy* and *Penthouse* are interested mainly in the articles. And that Show World Center is in business to sell souvenir key chains.

—HENDRIK HERTZBERG



"Dow Jonesy enough for you?"

Tiger Hunt (detail), 1854. Oil on canvas. Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Bequest of Alfred Chauchard.

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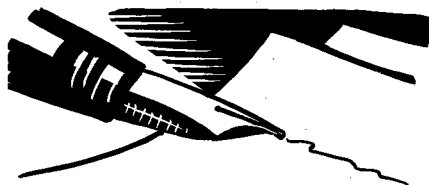
LORRIE MOORE (Fiction, p. 66) received a 1998 National Magazine Award for her short story "People Like That Are the Only People Here," which appeared in the January 27, 1997, issue of *The New Yorker*. Her books include two novels and the forthcoming collection of stories "Birds of America."



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THE MAIL



SORRY, CHARLEY

Calvin Tomkins laments that "critics have grown weary of stamping on" the reputation of Andrew Wyeth ("Mind Games," July 20th), so why won't he and his cohorts just stop stamping? There are millions of people—"wrong people," according to Tomkins—who find emotional and intellectual content in Wyeth's work, and they would be grateful if the critics would just amuse themselves with "omnivorous" artists, like Charles Ray, who have "ingested most of the major trends and influences of the nineteen-seventies," and keep their feet off Wyeth.

M. STEPHEN DOHERTY
Editor-in-chief, *American Artist*
New York City

Charles Ray's "orgy for one" ("Oh! Charley, Charley, Charley . . .," illustrating "Mind Games") is amusing, but neo-Dada shock schlock—of which this particular work is a prime example—is old news. This line of artistic expression has run from Marcel Duchamp to Jeff Koons, and it now looks far more *retardataire* and "stone dead" than the work of Andrew Wyeth—work that should not necessarily be criticized for its stylistic consistency. Mr. Tomkins suggests of the concurrent Whitney exhibits of the two artists that "seldom in recent years . . . have rear guard and cutting edge been paired more perplexingly." I quite agree. But who is "rear guard" and who is "cutting edge" is perhaps a bit more complicated than Tomkins's review implies.

CHRIS CROSMAN
Director, the Farnsworth Art Museum
Rockland, Maine

THE TYRANNY OF NORMALCY

Timothy Ferris correctly observes that the scientific method is basically incompatible with a good story line ("Not Rocket Science," July 20th), but I object to his statement that under

Russia's formerly tyrannical government "technology stumbled along" and "science died." Russian science proceeded with amazing vigor during even the darkest of Stalinist times. During the Soviet era, Landau, Kapitsa, Cherenkov, and Basov were awarded Nobel Prizes for their efforts, and many other Russian scientists secured their places in history. Paradoxically, it may have been the oppressive social reality that forced many exceptional individuals to pursue careers in science, which provided them with an oasis of rationality and objectivity free from the nonsense that otherwise permeates a totalitarian state. As the situation in Russia has become less oppressive and more normalized, the relative attraction of a scientific career seems to have diminished—as it has, arguably, throughout the rest of the free world. Science may "sicken under tyranny," but apathy is much deadlier.

PRZEMEK KLOSOWSKI
Gaithersburg, Md.

THE END IS FAR

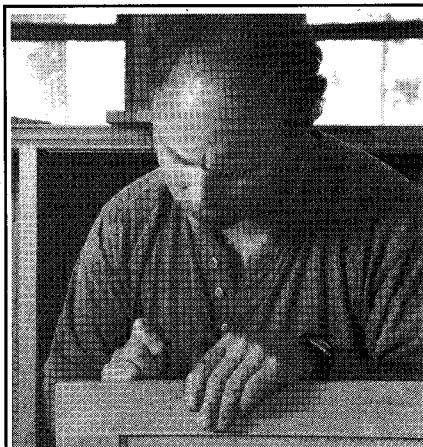
Lawrence Wright's account of an alliance of Orthodox Jews and fundamentalist Christians founded on messianic beliefs ("Forcing the End," July 20th) called to mind Isaac Bashevis Singer's genial skepticism about the subject. Asked by a member of the audience attending a lecture if he believed that the Messiah would come, Singer replied, "Let me answer your question this way: The Jews of Chelm hired a man to watch for the Messiah. It did not pay well, but it was a steady job."

J. H. POIVAN
Pennington, N.J.

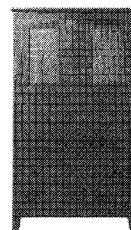
It's high time that we ratify a Red Heifer Non-Proliferation Treaty. Nations that currently have red heifers should keep them to themselves, and nations that do not should find some other way to bring on the apocalypse.

DAVID H. WEBBER
Washington, D.C.

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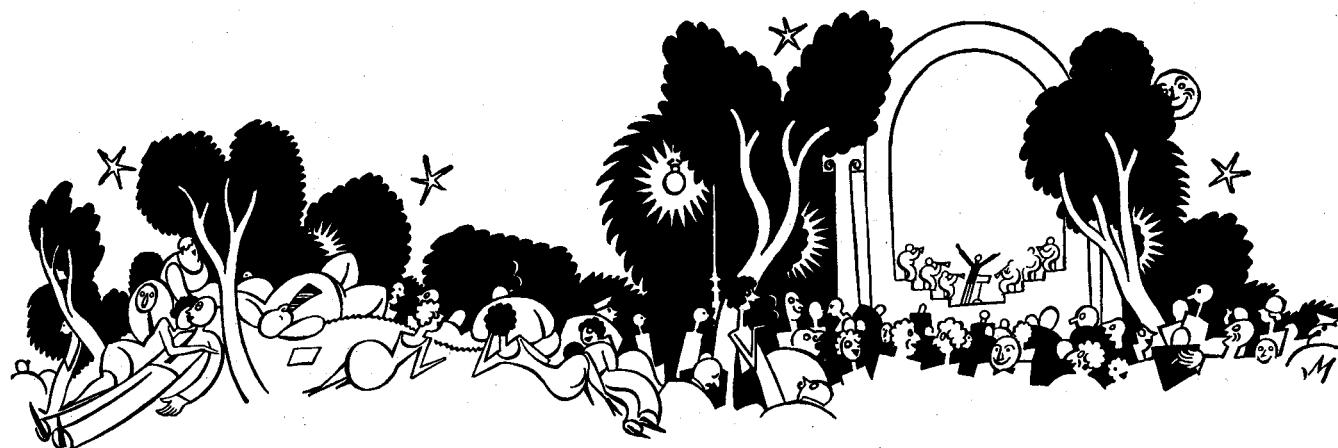
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THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

COLLECTED STORIES—Uta Hagen stars as a mentor to a young novelist, in Donald Margulies's 1997 drama. Preview on Aug. 12. Opens Aug. 13 at 6:30. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

COMMUNICATING DOORS—Mary-Louise Parker, Patricia Hodges, and David McCallum star in Alan Ayckbourn's comic thriller, set in London in 1978, 1998, and 2018, in which two women travel in time to change their fate. In previews. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 13th St. 239-6200.)

CONDUCT OF A TIN MAN—The Ontological Theatre presents a play by Anne de Mare and Randall Jaynes, about "an isolated man embittered by rust and addicted to oil." Opens Aug. 12 at 8 and runs through Aug. 22. (St. Mark's-in-the-Bowery, Second Ave. at 10th St. 533-4650.)

CYMBELINE—Andrei Serban is the director of the New York Shakespeare Festival's second outdoor production of the season. In previews through Aug. 15. Opens Aug. 16 at 8 and continues through Aug. 30. (Delacorte Theatre, Central Park near W. 81st St. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 539-8750.)

THE EROTICA PROJECT—A collection of monologues about sex, written by Lillian Ann Slugocki, Erin Cressida Wilson, John Patrick Shanley, and Laurie Stone. Aug. 14-15 at

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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10:30. Continues through Aug. 29. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202.)

PEREGRINATION—The Ma-Yi Theatre begins its tenth season with Chris B. Millado's drama, which traces the lives of a group of Filipino migrant workers during the thirties. In previews through Aug. 15. Opens Aug. 16 at 2 and continues through Aug. 30. (Theatre Row Theatre, 424 W. 42nd St. 581-8896.)

THE TRAMWAY END—A drama by the Irish playwright Dermot Bolger, originally seen at Dublin's Gate Theatre, about an Irish expatriate living in Germany. In previews. (Chelsea Playhouse, 125 W. 22nd St. 388-2806.)

OPENED RECENTLY

ART—Yasmina Reza's farce is a splendid vehicle for three masterly actors, Victor Garber, Alan Alda, and Alfred Molina. They portray friends whose fifteen-year relationship is threatened when one of them buys a large white canvas for two hundred thousand

francs. Directed by Matthew Warchus. (Reviewed in our issue of 3/23/98.) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

THE BEAUTY QUEEN OF LEENANE—The precocious Anglo-Irish playwright Martin McDonagh's riveting winter's tale, set in a rural Irish cottage, about an aged mother and her virgin forty-year-old daughter, who is trapped in a punishing solitude. It's a simple, primitive story, yet it is filled with complex emotional surprises and reversals. (3/16/98) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

CAPITOL STEPS—The troupe of former congressional aides and interns presents its latest political-comedy revue, "Unzippin' My Doo-Dah and Other National Priorities." (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

CHICAGO CITY LIMITS—The improv company presents its latest revue, "@Chicago City Limits.comedy." (Chicago City Limits Theatre, First Ave. at 61st St. 888-5233.)

DINAH WAS—Oliver Goldstick's play about the late blues singer Dinah Washington, starring Lillias White. (Gramercy Theatre, 127 E. 23rd St. 307-4100.)

AN EVENING WITH JERRY HERMAN—The songwriter ("Hello, Dolly!," "Mame") stars with Lee Roy Reams and Florence Lacey in a revue of his own songs. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

EXTREME GIRL—A one-woman comedy written and performed by Barbara Blackburn and directed by Elise Thoron. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 239-6200. Closes Aug. 23.)

FALSETTOLAND—William Finn and James Lapine's 1990 musical, in a National Asian American Theatre Company staging. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 505-3003. Closes Aug. 16.)

HIGH SOCIETY—This musical, based on Philip Barry's play "The Philadelphia Story" and the subsequent movie "High Society," has all the kick of flat champagne. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

HUNDREDS OF SISTERS & ONE BIG BROTHER—A one-woman show by Deborah Swisher, about her black-Jewish childhood in a Berkeley commune. Wednesdays at 8, through Sept. 2. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202.)

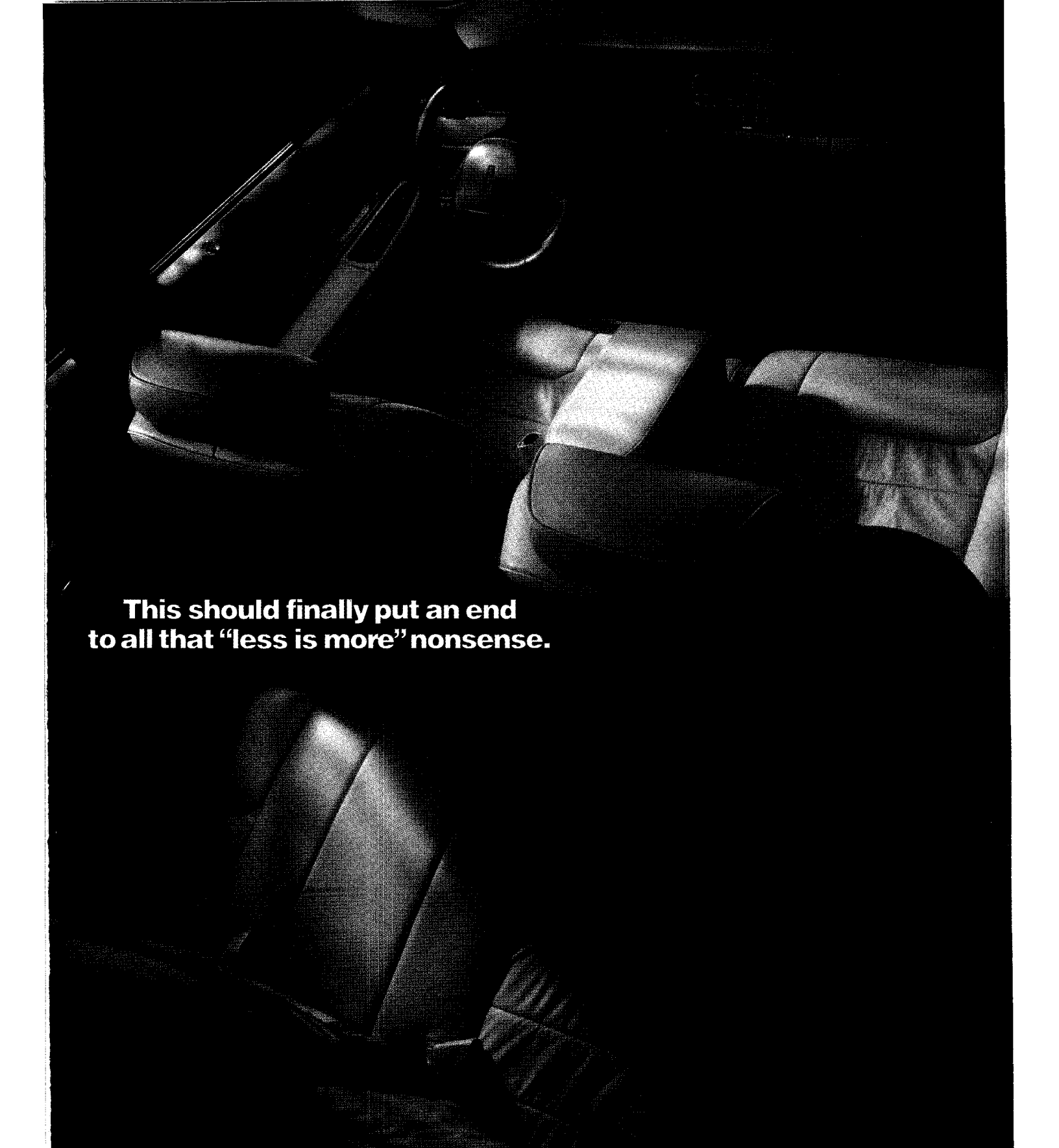
ICE FACTORY 98—The SoHo Think Tank's summer series comes to a close with "Gravity," a drama focussing on the lives of an autistic woman and her autistic grandson. Aug. 13-15 at 7. (Ohio Theatre, 66 Wooster St. 966-4844.)

THE IRISH... AND HOW THEY GOT THAT WAY—This revue by Frank McCourt, author of the best-selling memoir "Angela's Ashes," is a generally good-natured if somewhat choppy amalgam of historical tidbits, quotations from letters and speeches, and Irish songs from the past two centuries, performed by a versatile and charming cast of six singers and musicians. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737. Closes Sept. 6.)

JEAN COCTEAU REP—The company opens the season with Sartre's "No Exit." (Bowery Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)



Uta Hagen and Lorca Simons, in Donald Margulies's "Collected Stories."



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JAYSON—A musical by Jeff Krell, based on his gay cartoon series. With music and lyrics by Ron Romanovsky and Paul Phillips. (45th Street Theatre, 354 W. 45th St. 279-4200. Closes Aug. 16.)

THE LAST EMPRESS—From Korea, a musical about the life of Queen Min of the Chosun kingdom. Performances are in Korean with English supertitles. (New York State Theatre, 307-4100.)

MISS COCO PERU'S LIQUID UNIVERSE—A heartfelt series of how-I-got-this-way vignettes written and performed by Miss Coco Peru, otherwise known as Clinton Leupp. The show is occasionally syrupy, but Miss Coco's self-aware and self-lacerating humor and her engaging way with a story make this a winning evening. Sundays at 8. (Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. 741-0391.)

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING—The Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival's second offering of the summer. (Boscobel Restoration, Garrison, N.Y. For ticket information and directions, call 914-265-9575. Closes Aug. 16.)

A NEW BRAIN—A new musical by William Finn ("Falsettos") and James Lapine, about a songwriter awaiting surgery. Graciela Daniele is the director. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

NUNSENSE A-MEN—An all-male version of Dan Goggin's 1985 musical comedy, "Nunsense." (47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

THE PILLARS OF SOCIETY—The Century Center's Ibsen series opens with a brief engagement of the playwright's drama about a hypocritical businessman. (111 E. 15th St. 982-6782, ext. 30. Closes Aug. 23.)

PLAYSTATION, LEVELS 1-4—Judy Elkan's comedy examines the days and nights of three downtown glamour girls. (Excellent Art Manufacturing, 86 Forsyth St. 414-5167.)

POWER PLAYS—Three short plays, two written by Elaine May and one by Alan Arkin, who perform them with Jeannie Berlin and Anthony Arkin, their respective offspring. All of the plays are too long, but the comic brilliance of May and Arkin père (who also di-

rected) is worth, at a rough estimate, ten million times the price of admission. Presented by Manhattan Theatre Club. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313. Closes Sept. 6.)

SAKINA'S RESTAURANT—Aasif Mandvi portrays six characters in his one-man exploration of the South Asian community in New York. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

SIDE MAN—The Roundabout Theatre presents Warren Leight's drama, which was staged earlier this year Off Broadway. It's a nostalgic but never sappy paean to the musical obsessiveness and worldly indifference of mid-century big-band musicians, cleverly structured as the recollections of one musician's put-upon son. Though the play gives short shrift to the characters, it invites the audience into the world of music-making, and the cast is good enough to make the whole thing come alive. Solidly directed by Michael Mayer. (Broadway at 45th St. 719-1300.)

SMOKE ON THE MOUNTAIN—In this sweet and funny musical comedy, set on a Saturday night in June, 1938, the Mount Pleasant (North Carolina) Baptist Church awaits the arrival of the Sanders Family singers and musicians. The show features Mike Craver and Mark Hardwick's tuneful, often bluegrass arrangements of songs like "Bringing in the Sheaves," "I'll Fly Away," and "Rock of Ages." (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

THE SOUND OF MUSIC—Rebecca Luker is enormously winning as Maria, and the seven children in the cast are mostly delightful, but the production doesn't linger in the memory; there may be music in those hills, but the producers didn't seem to find a whole lot of fresh air up there. (4/6/98) (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

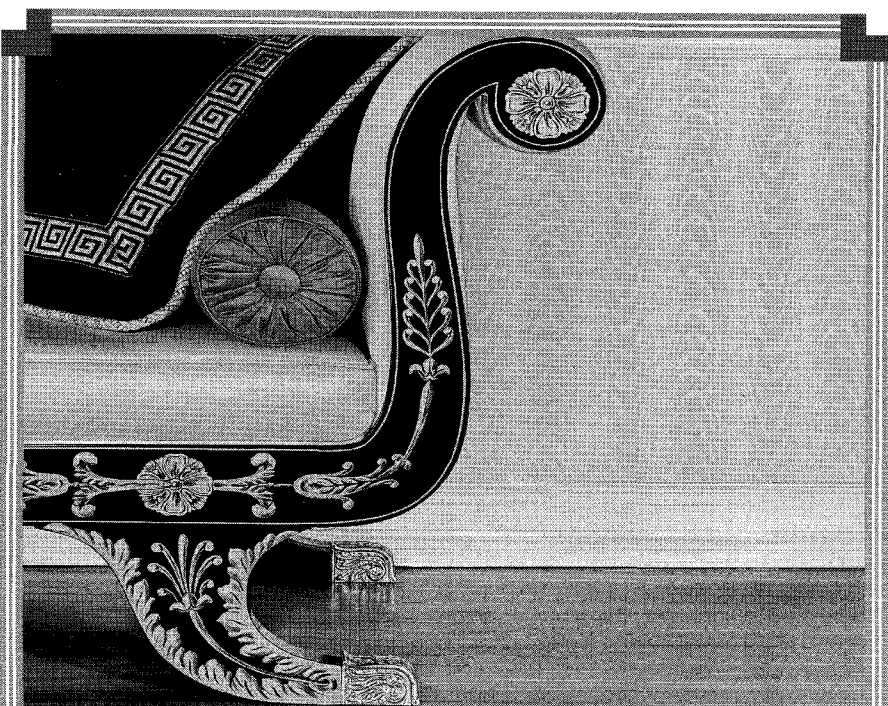
SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE—Abstract puppets underwater, set to the music of Berlioz. This isn't rubber-duckie performance art; just as dance can make space a palpable presence onstage, the show's creator, Basil Twist, uses feathers, streamers, mirrors, bubbles, and sophisticated lighting to do the same for water. And, as in dance, the movement illuminates the music. A peerless, delightful summer evening. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202. Closes Aug. 30.)

TWELFTH NIGHT—Get thee to Lincoln Center, for Nicholas Hytner's absolutely magical staging of Shakespeare's comedy. To single out any one member of the cast for praise would be wrong, and criticism would seem like nit-picking in the face of so much fun. The only wrong note struck is the traditional curtain call: much of the applause is for the extraordinary work of Bob Crowley (sets), Natasha Katz (lighting), Catherine Zuber (costumes), Jeanine Tesori (music), and Scott Stauffer (sound), none of whom are there to take a bow. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Closes Aug. 30.)

VILLA VILLA—Theatre as mosh pit. The Argentinean troupe De La Guarda herds you into a crowded space, performs undistinguished rock music, swings on ropes over your head, and splashes you until you're drenched. (Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E., at 15th St. 239-6200.)

WHEN I WAS A GIRL, I USED TO SCREAM AND SHOUT—A dark coming-of-age comedy by Sharman Macdonald, set in Scotland in the fifties and sixties. (John Montgomery, 134 W. 26th St. 627-7076. Closes Aug. 29.)

YOU NEVER CAN TELL—A summer treat from the Roundabout Theatre Company. In Shaw's early comedy, a young dentist (the wry and handsome Robert Sean Leonard) tries to romantically outwit an ostensibly modern turn-of-the-century woman (Katie Finneran) but ends up succumbing to her inherently old-fashioned ways. Allen Moyer's seaside-resort set is lovely, as are Michael Krass's costumes, and the cast is super. It would have been a better day at the beach, though, had the director, Nicholas Martin, toned down Catherine



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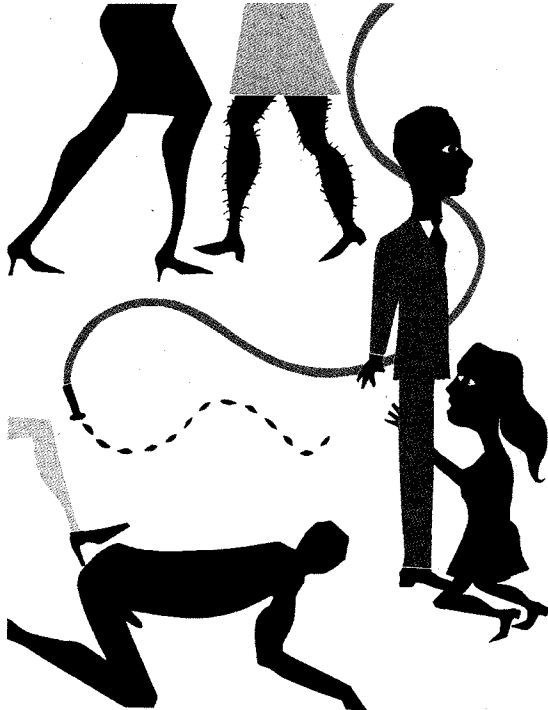
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Kellner and Saxon Palmer, whose precocious-siblings act seems more suited to Looney Tunes. (Broadway at 45th St. 719-1300.)

LONG RUNS

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST: Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. ... **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. ... **BRING IN DA NOISE, BRING IN DA FUNK:** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200. ... **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. ... **CHICAGO:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. ... **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. ... **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY**



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STRIKES BACK! Stardust, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200. ... **GROSS INDECENCY: THE THREE TRIALS OF OSCAR WILDE:** Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000. ... **HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH:** Jane Street Theatre, Hotel Riverview Ballroom, 113 Jane St. 239-6200. ... **HOWARD CRABTREE'S WHEN PIGS FLY:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. (Closes Aug. 14.) ... **I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE:** Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200. ... **JEKYLL & HYDE:** Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. ... **LATE-NITE CATECHISM:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200. ... **THE LION KING:** New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100. ... **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. ... **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. ... **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. ... **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. ... **RAGTIME:** Ford Center for the Performing Arts, 213 W. 42nd St. 307-4100. ... **R & J:** John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 354-2220. ... **RENT:** Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000. ... **THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL:** Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100. ... **SECRETS EVERY SMART TRAVELER SHOULD KNOW:** Triad, 158 W. 72nd St. 799-4599. ... **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. ... **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. ... **TITANIC:** Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100. ... **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200. ... **A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE:** Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100. ... **VISITING MR. GREEN:** Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 505-0700.

DANCE

LINCOLN CENTER OUT-OF-DOORS—Aug. 12 at 5:30: The Formosa Aboriginal Song and Dance Troupe performs tribal dances of Taiwan. (Fountain Plaza.) ... Aug. 13 at 6: The New York Baroque Dance Company re-creates eighteenth-century French versions of Native American dances. (Fountain Plaza.) ... Aug. 13-14 at 8: The twelve-member Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, with guest dancer Tamica Washington, presents two works by Donald McKayle, "Games" and "Rainbow 'Round My Shoulder," along with Dwight Rhoden's "Beyond a Cliff" and Sharon Leahy's "If the Shoe Fits." (Damarosch Park.) (For rain dates and festival schedule, call 875-5108. No tickets necessary.)

ELIOT FELD'S BALLET TECH—Aug. 11 and Aug. 14 at 8: "Asia," "Re: X," "A Soldier's Tale," and "Paper Tiger." ... Aug. 12-13 and Aug. 15 at 8: "A Footstep of Air," "Over the Pavement," and "Skara Brae." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800.)

CELEBRATE BROOKLYN!—Twyla Tharp and her new company present "Fugue," "Roy's Joys," and "Sweet Fields." (Prospect Park Bandshell, Prospect Park W. at 9th St. Aug. 15 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

NOCHE FLAMENCA—The premier flamenco ensemble closes out its summer engagement. (Theatre 80, at 80 St. Marks Pl. 279-4200. Aug. 11-15 at 8.)

OUT OF TOWN

JACOB'S PILLOW DANCE FESTIVAL—Aug. 11-13 at 8, Aug. 14 at 8:30, and Aug. 15 at 2 and 8:30: José Greco Flamenco Dance Company. ... Aug. 13-14 at 8:15 and Aug. 15-16 at 5: Ann Carlson. (Becket, Mass. For information about tickets, call 413-243-0745.)

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

"MAMALOSHEN"—The singer-actor Mandy Patinkin performs a selection of Yiddish songs, accompanied by violinist Saeka Matsuyama and pianist Eric Stern. (Angel Orensanz Foundation Center for the Arts, 172 Norfolk St., at E. Houston St. 431-8102. Aug. 12 and Aug. 15 at 2, and Aug. 12-15 and Aug. 18 at 8. Through Aug. 22.)

SUSAN McKEOWN—The leader of the Celtic pop group Chanting House kicks off the Hot Summer, Cool Voices series. (Flea Theatre, 41 White St., between Broadway and Church St. 226-0051. Aug. 13 at 10.)

THE BLUIETT/JACKSON/THIAM TRIO—Featuring baritone saxophonist Hamiet Bluiett, pianist D. D. Jackson, and percussionist Mor Thiam. Part of the Lincoln Center Out-of-Doors festival. (North Plaza. Aug. 14 at 6:30. No tickets necessary.)

CELEBRATE BROOKLYN!—The Bang on a Can All-Stars perform Brian Eno's ambient work "Music for Airports." With subway-platform stars Mecca Bodega, who mix percussion, guitar, and didgeridoo. (Prospect Park Bandshell, Prospect Park W. at 9th St. Aug. 14 at 7:30. No tickets necessary.)

BONNIE RAITT/JACKSON BROWNE—Old pop soldiers never die, they just play acoustic shows by the beach. It's hard to imagine two performers better suited for unplugged shows at this sea-swept arena. Both have song catalogues that are as sinewy and weathered as an old tugboat, and both have spent a good deal of time swimming with sharks. (Jones Beach Theatre. 516-221-1000. Aug. 14 at 8.)

"EL REENCUENTRO"—In which the original members of Menudo take the stage again. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. Aug. 14-15 at 8.)

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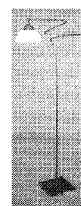
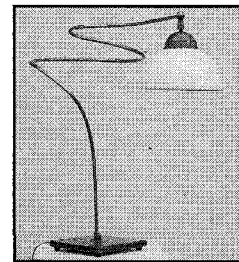
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BRAN VAN 3000/OZOMATLI—Two fascinating big bands that graft punk and experimental impulses to a multi-instrumental lineup. (Central Park SummerStage, Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. Aug. 15 at 3. No tickets necessary.)

VAN HALEN/KENNY WAYNE SHEPHERD—America's greatest gift to air guitar has become a lumbering truck-stop-bar band. With the teen guitar prodigy Shepherd. (Jones Beach Theatre. Aug. 15 at 8.)

JERRY LEE LEWIS/CHUCK BERRY—The Killer and the duck-walker. (Westbury Music Fair. 516-334-0800. Aug. 15 at 8.)

CLUBS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

ACME UNDERGROUND, 9 Great Jones St. (677-6963)—Aug. 12: John Flansburgh's **MONO PUFF** pays tribute to spoken-word artist Ken Nordine and his album "Colors."

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Aug. 12: Former Television guitarist **RICHARD LLOYD**. With the transplanted British guitarist **FRANCIS DUNNERY**. Aug. 13: **LISA**

J. CORNELIO, an up-and-coming country singer from New England. Aug. 14: **ED PALERMO** and his big band play the music of Frank Zappa. Aug. 15: The bittersweet excellence of romantic pop-and-jazz vocalist **KENNY RANKIN**.

BOWERY BALLROOM, 6 Delancey St. (533-2111)—Aug. 18: **PATTY GRIFFIN**, a red-headed neo-folkie with the voice of a fire breather. With **GREG GARING'S FULL CIRCLE**.

CHICAGO B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Aug. 13: **SUGAR BLUE**, whose harp work (most famously on the Stones' "Miss You") has earned him the sobriquet the Jimi Hendrix of the Harmonica.

CONEY ISLAND HIGH, 15 St. Marks Pl. (674-7959)—Aug. 14: Perfect, a new combo led by former Replacements bassist **TOMMY STINSON**.

FEZ, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—Aug. 12: **HOLLY PALMER**. Aug. 18: The Brooklyn trio **IDA** offers its cool brand of cerebral pop. With **SUE GARNER**, bassist and singer for the great alt-pop band Run On, who arrives with some songs from her first solo effort, "To Run More Smoothly." The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

IRVING PLAZA, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—Aug. 12: Monolithic, industrial dance music from Belgium's **FRONT 242**. ... ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday, with sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

MAXWELL'S, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken (201-798-4064)—Aug. 12: The crowd parted at a recent **ELLIOTT SMITH** show in New York to let Lou Reed through to the VIP section; it was unclear if the old master was checking out the competition or passing a well-deserved torch. The twenty-eight-year-old Smith has been brightening the darker corners of the indie underground for years with blurry, beautiful vignettes that set Reed's

strung-out sensibility against melodies that wouldn't be out of place on a Beatles album. Smith tends to perform on small stages with an acoustic guitar, a straight-backed chair, and an unusually hushed audience. That should change soon—his work on the "Good Will Hunting" soundtrack (which resulted in an unlikely Oscar nomination and a performance on the Oscar telecast) and an upcoming major-label debut will undoubtedly lead to closer national attention.

MERCURY LOUNGE, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Already big in England, **CATATONIA** (Aug. 13) plays Garbage-flavored pop. Aug. 14: The precocious Staten Island duo **PROFESSOR** and **MARYANN** balances the cerebral (courtesy of guitarist-songwriter Ken Rockwell) with dark good looks (from helium-throated singer Danielle Brancaccio). Aug. 18: The smooth lounge pop of **MINI-KING**.

TRAMPS, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Aug. 13: **MORRIS DAY** and **THE TIME**. The zoot-suited Lothario and his ferociously funky cohorts are still at it. "Jungle Love," baby. Aug. 14: **BADAR ALI KHAN**. After the untimely death of the great Pakistani devotional singer Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan (a hero to such disparate stars as Eddie Vedder and Peter Gabriel), the torch has been passed to the master's young cousin Badar, whose



Elliott Smith, at Maxwell's.

soaring tenor often worked as filigree to Nusrat's mountainous lower register. He's quickly becoming accustomed to the world-music spotlight.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Vocalist **LAINIE KAZAN** is at work in the Oak Room through Aug. 22. Dining.

BIRDLAND, 315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—Aug. 12-13: Bassist **MARC JOHNSON** has a thing for small groups driven by two guitars. His eighties band, Bass Desires, featured John Scofield and Bill Frisell; his most recent recording, "The Sound of Summer Running," offers Frisell and Pat Metheny.

Neither of those heavyweights will be with Johnson for this set, but the impressive young guitarists **BEN MONDER** and **KURT ROSENWINKEL** will be. Aug. 14-15: There are few better settings than a quartet in which to experience the percussive magic of the legendary **ROY HAYNES**. His astute teammates include saxophonist **DAVID SANCHEZ** and pianist **DAVE KIKOWSKI**. Aug. 16: The **CHICO O'FARRILL AFRO-CUBAN JAZZ BIG BAND**. Aug. 17: The **TOSHIKO AKIYOSHI JAZZ ORCHESTRA**. Aug. 18: Drummer **CHARLI PERSIP**, one of the unsung journeymen of the sixties, did terrific work with everyone from Eric Dolphy to Dizzy Gillespie. With his experience and knowledge to guide it, his band, Supersound, can let down its hair and roar. Dining.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Aug. 16: In the early fifties, when singer **JON HENDRICKS** was a student at the University of Toledo Law School, Charlie Parker played a gig with him and offered the following words of wisdom: "You are not a lawyer, you are a jazz musician. Quit school and come to New York." The rest is history. With pianist and vocalist **LOSTON HARRIS** and his trio. Dining.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—Pianist **PETER MINTUN** is in the midst of a two-month stay at Bemelmans Bar.

CITRON 47, at 401 W. 47th St. (397-4747)—A comfy living-room bistro in Hell's Kitchen. The **CHUCK WILSON** quartet is out to show that Monday nights aren't just for big bands. Swing saxophonist Wilson's chamber-jazz foursome includes guitarist **HOWARD ALDEN**, a master of pre-bop idioms, trombonist **JOEL HELLENY**, and bassist **MURRAY WALL**. The Brazilian percussionist **CAFE** leads his own eclectic group on Tuesdays. Dining.

COVE RESTAURANT, 2 South End Ave., Battery Park City (964-1500)—The Microscopic Septet is now a fond memory, but its former pianist, **JOEL FORRESTER**, has bounced back nicely. This delightfully eclectic stylist and composer turns a regular Tuesday-and-Thursday-night engagement into a showcase for one man's parallel musical universe. Special guests are also promised.

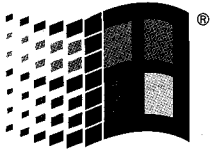
IRIDIUM, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through Aug. 16: An unexpected pleasure of the past few years has been the emergence of the West Coast-based pianist, composer, and onetime avant-garde big-band leader **HORACE TAPSCOTT**, who has been virtually unheard in these parts. He's an accomplished, forthright, and comfortably modern player; with drummer **BILLY HART** and bassist **RAY DRUMMOND** on hand, Tapscott should call up the delights of his recent recordings on Arabesque. Mondays belong to **LES PAUL**. Now eighty-two, the master guitarist and inventor is a delightfully loose cannon. Besides playing silkily-toned, eccentrically phrased lines with an ease that belies the passing decades, Paul schmoozes with his band, the crowd, the waiters, and anyone else who happens into the club. There's no more entertaining way to start the workweek.

JAZZ STANDARD, 116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—The gifted conservative trumpeter **TERRELL STAFFORD** (through Aug. 15) should have all the support he needs from a well-chosen band that features two old cohorts from Horizon—drummer **VICTOR LEWIS** and pianist **STEPHEN SCOTT**—along with saxophonist **DICK OATTS** and bassist **ED HOWARD**.

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Brass rails, vintage posters, Hirschfeld drawings, and a piano. Through Aug. 15: **LEE MUSIKER** (piano) and **JAY LEONHART** (bass).

KNITTING FACTORY, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Aug. 14: Guitarist **DAN ROSE** comes in with his trio. Aug. 15-16: Organist and acid-jazz pioneer **REUBEN WILSON**. Aug. 16: The pianist **MATTHEW SHIPP** is integral to the celebratory squalls produced by terrorist tenor David S. Ware's quartet. On his own, Shipp balances his post-Cecil Taylor keyboard eruptions with passages of lyric calm. He's partnered here

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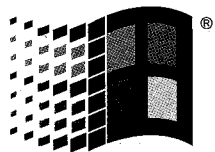
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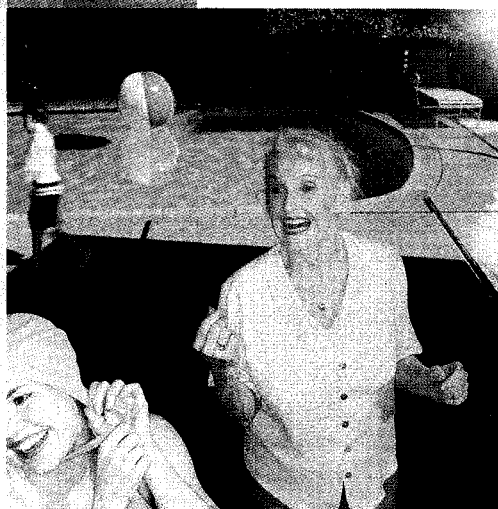


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with the violinist **MAT MANERI**, who is also an essential cog in another player's ensemble—that of his father, the innovative saxophonist Joe Maneri.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Through Aug. 16: The **CHICO FREEMAN** quintet, with **CANDIDO**. Freeman, a versatile instrumentalist who concentrates on tenor sax, is making a very graceful transition from youthful avant-gardist to middle-aged classicist. With his complete command of the horn, he can now move in any direction he pleases—the ultimate freedom. The presence of **Candido**, the preeminent percussionist of the fifties, makes this a special set. Dining.

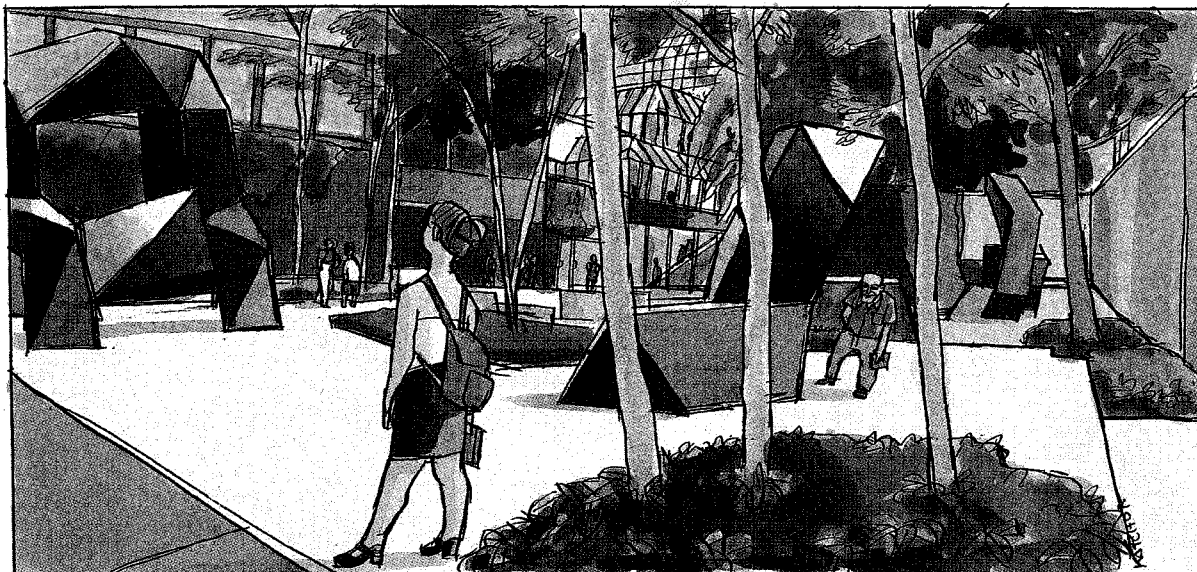
TONIC, 107 Norfolk St. (358-7503)—Aug. 12: Every game worth playing has its own set of rules, especially the structured musical improvisation of **JOHN ZORN'S COBRA**. Zorn has been playing at this adventure in formal freedom for more than a decade, and it's

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—“Edward Burne-Jones: Victorian Artist-Dreamer,” a splendid survey devoted to this preeminent Pre-Raphaelite. The exhibition includes paintings, works on paper, books, stained glass, and tapestries that Burne-Jones executed in collaboration with his friend William Morris. Burne-Jones was immersed in the past—in medieval legends and fantasies, which form the basis of most of his pictures, as well as in his febrile attention to Italian Renaissance painting. Burne-Jones has been unfashionable for a century; this show reanimates him. Through Sept. 6. . . . ¶ “Ellsworth Kelly on the Roof.” Through late fall. . . . ¶ The French designer Jean Dunand (1877-1942) richly deserves the moniker the Met has bestowed on him

respective of Alexander Rodchenko (1891-1956) is valuable as much for its insights into the rise and decline of the Russian Revolution as for its art-historical contribution. A leader of the avant-garde in the twenties, Rodchenko was a founder of Constructivism, an early—and very witty—practitioner of photomontage, and a brilliant graphic designer. Through Oct. 6. . . . ¶ “David Goldblatt: Photographs from South Africa” is a strangely understated series of black-and-white photographs taken in South Africa at the end of the apartheid era. The photographer states that he was drawn to “the quiet and commonplace, where nothing ‘happened,’ and yet all was contained and immanent.” A few of the images here, such as those documenting the squalid living conditions of black South Africans, are powerfully self-explanatory, but most of them occupy a curious middle ground between reportage and photography for art's sake. Many visi-



Tony Smith sculptures take over the Sculpture Garden at MOMA.

now a downtown tradition. Aug. 13: **FRANK LONDON**. As the stylistically diverse trumpeter for the Klezmatics, an ingenious composer of independent-film scores, and a leader of his own ethnic/new-music/new-jazz ensembles, London has proved that for some creative types, labels just don't stick. Aug. 14: To judge from his individualistic work with the late drum master Ed Blackwell, saxophonist Dewey Redman, and others, it's clear that bassist **MARK HELIAS** is one of the unsung jazz heroes of the past two decades. His own bands are always committed to the new, shunning conventional approaches to form and improvisation. Aug. 15: **GUY KLUCEVSEK**. The accordion hasn't yet replaced the guitar or saxophone as the popular instrument of choice, but it's certainly gained more clout over the past fifteen years, thanks in no small part to intrepid new-music pioneers like Klucevsek. Aug. 16: Coltrane's last drummer, **RASHIED ALI**, is still extolling the joys of metric freedom that the master imparted in their brief but intense association. He's accompanied by the equally adventurous bassist **WILBER MORRIS** and the tenor saxophonist **LOUIS BELOGENIS**.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through Aug. 16: “Jazz Meets Flamenco.” This atypical Vanguard booking features keyboardist **GIL GOLDSTEIN** and Spanish neo-flamenco icon **CARLES BENAVENT**, apparently an Iberian monster of the bass guitar. As the country goes, so goes New York jazz: it was only a matter of time until multi-culti imperatives showed up in this hallowed hall. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

in this mini-retrospective: “Master of Art Deco.” Through Oct. 25. . . . ¶ “American Ingenuity,” at the Costume Institute, pays tribute to the pioneer women of sportswear—Claire McCardell, Bonnie Cashin, Anne Klein, Vera Maxwell, and Elizabeth Hawes—who gave American ingénues their look of dressy nonchalance. Through Aug. 16. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—The first New York retrospective devoted to Pierre Bonnard in thirty years. Through Oct. 13. (See also Galleries—Uptown.) . . . ¶ “Love Forever: Yayoi Kusama, 1958-68.” (See also Galleries—Downtown.) Through Sept. 22. . . . ¶ “Tony Smith: Architect, Painter, Sculptor,” a comprehensive retrospective devoted to an artist too often lumped with the Minimalists, largely due to his reliance on reductivist geometries in his black sculptures (several large ones have been installed in public places throughout the city, including, notably, Seagram Plaza, at Park Ave. and 52nd St.). Best known for these sculptures, Smith nevertheless worked prolifically in painting, drawing, and modernist architecture, all of which are on display. But for all the breadth, this is a refreshingly tight and focused exhibition, with relatively little fat to trim. Best of all, Philip Johnson's magnificent sculpture garden has been cleverly reinstalled with only Smith sculptures, mostly of medium scale, although the huge hit of last year's Chelsea gallery season, “Moondog” (1964), also puts in an appropriately monumental appearance. Through Sept. 22. . . . ¶ The impressive ret-

tors, unless they read the lengthy texts accompanying the photographs, will have no idea what the images are meant to evoke. A boldly composed study of a tacky modern church could just as easily have been shot in Indiana as in Pretoria; only after reading a summary of the starchily conservative doctrines preached there does the significance of “contained and immanent” reveal itself. Through Oct. 6. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 6; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:30.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—It would be easy to dismiss the Danish painter Vilhelm Hammershøi (1864-1916) as a reactionary purveyor of genre scenes: the echoes of Vermeer and de Hooch in his gray, deserted street scenes and empty rooms are all too obvious. Yet Hammershøi is very much a man of his own time. A chilly, bare interior of an elegant baroque palace hall (1909) speaks of the dawning of conscious alienation in the early twentieth century as powerfully as the works of Hammershøi's contemporaries in Paris expressed the era's idealism. Through Sept. 7. . . . ¶ “The Art of the Motorcycle,” a dazzling collection of a hundred and eleven bikes, from the late nineteenth century to the present. The installation, designed by Frank Gehry, is itself a work of art: the architect has faced the ramps of the rotunda with stainless steel, giving a hallucinatory shimmer to Frank Lloyd Wright's masterpiece. The show might be summarized in one word: bitchin'. Through Sept. 20. . . . ¶ “Peggy Guggenheim: A Centennial Celebration.” This hundredth-birthday fête for the century's most renowned benefactress of

BEN KATCHOR

the avant-garde is distinctly archeological, using letters, guestbooks, photographs, and even a few art works to cast her as one of high society's last pharaohs: her bedchamber is reconstructed here in its original shade of turquoise, and features a reliquary filled with scores of earrings designed by the likes of Alexander Calder. Through Sept. 2. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM SoHo, 575 Broadway, at Prince St. (423-3500)—“The Hugo Boss Prize, 1998.” The lineup of finalists for the fifty-thousand-dollar award is multinational and multicultural: Douglas Gordon (the winner) from Scotland, Lorna Simpson from the United States, William Kentridge from South Africa, Lee Bul from South Korea, Pipilotti Rist from Switzerland, and Huang Yong Ping from China. Most of the work on view, however, is familiar enough to gallerygoers, and it seems considerably less transgressive than one might have imagined. The show does confirm certain trends in recent art: a vaguely politicized undercurrent and the continuing reliance on installation, film, and video. Through Sept. 20. . . . ¶ Four video installations (“Bronx,” “Roma,” “Liquid Crystals,” and “Baroque Cathodic Movements”) by the Venetian artist Fabrizio Plessi. Through Sept. 13. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

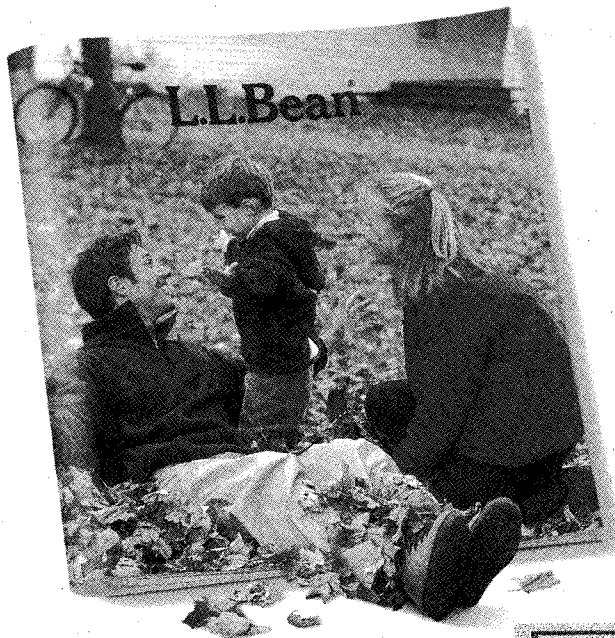
WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—A mid-career retrospective of Charles Ray, one of the most discreet yet powerful artists to emerge from the raucous L.A. art scene. Through Aug. 30. . . . ¶ “Unknown Terrain: The Landscapes of Andrew Wyeth.” Through Aug. 30. . . . ¶ “The Studio Within” is a Disneyesque mockup of Richard Pousette-Dart’s last atelier (in a carriage house in Suffern, New York), which, for hokey verisimilitude, lacks only an animated likeness of the late Abstract Expressionist flinging some paint around. Still, it’s worth a look, if only for the diary pages, the odd white sculptures in the eaves, and several fine paintings, like the bubblegum impasto of “Amalfi” (1962). Through Sept. 13. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, Central Park W. at 79th St. (769-5100)—The recently opened Hall of Biodiversity, a permanent exhibit, attempts to make vivid the dangers posed to life on Earth by the exploding human population and the consequent degradation of the global environment. The centerpiece is a diorama of the Central African rain forest, enclosed in a glass box of spectacular dimensions. The museum has raided the attic to create a handsomely displayed encyclopedia of flora and fauna called “Spectrum of Life,” which covers the hall’s western wall and continues on an overhead canopy. Computers loaded with videos enable visitors to learn about everything from the results of American ichthyological research in Gabon to the tragedy of the ongoing forest fires in Indonesia. There’s almost too much multimedia interactivity going on, though: the blare of video monitors and a film presentation make the atmosphere somewhat hectic. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART, Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—“Masters of Color and Light: Homer, Sargent, and the American Watercolor Movement” showcases more than a hundred and fifty works from the museum’s extensive collection. Through Aug. 23. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays, 11 to 9; and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

FASHION INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, Seventh Ave. at 27th St. (217-5800)—“School Uniforms: A Hot Topic!” presents the latest suggestions from F.I.T. design students for fetching scholastic apparel, including fleece tops and vinyl stretch pants, cowboy sportswear, and Ultrasuede-jacket-and-bike-short ensembles. Through Aug. 15. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, noon to 8; Saturdays, 10 to 5.)

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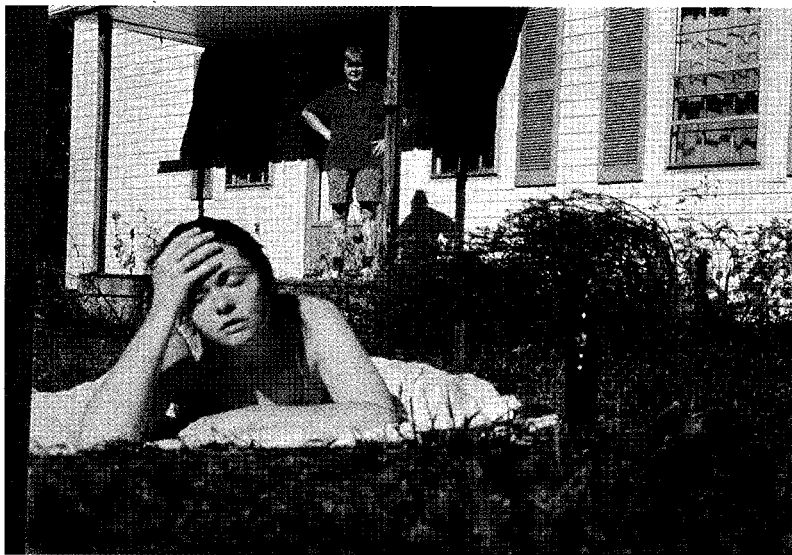
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An untitled photograph by Tracey Baran, in "Neighborhood Watch," at Saul.

MUSEUM OF AMERICAN FOLK ART, Columbus Ave. at 65th St. (977-7170)—The twelve watercolors exhibited in "Mary Ann Willson: Artist Maid" have their modest charms, but the exhibit's principal interest derives from the painter's unusual life: she was a lesbian who lived openly with her lover, known as Miss Brundage, the "farmer maid," in upstate New York during the early nineteenth century. The story of their love was the basis of a cult novel called "Patience and Sarah," by Isabel Miller, which in turn inspired Paula Kemper's opera of the same title, which premiered in July at the Lincoln Center Festival. Willson was a courageous pioneer in every sense of the word, but these awkwardly composed, flatly painted portraits and Biblical scenes suggest that she was not a gifted artist, even within the limitations of the naive tradition. Through Sept. 27. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11:30 to 7:30.)

P.S. 1 CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER, 22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave., Long Island City (718-784-2084)—Although never as well known here as his *Landmann* Gerhard Richter, Sigmar Polke was one of the leading founders of Pop art in Europe, a strain of the movement that was darker and more enigmatic than the fun stuff going on in New York. This suite of forty gouaches, which carries the characteristically opaque title "Music of Unclassified Origin," is described as a self-portrait; if that's what it is, Polke is a puzzling fellow. Number forty displays washes of pure color, overlaid with the outlines of two human heads crudely rendered in broken black lines. The title explains, helpfully: "There's always a pecking order," says Dagmar Steffen and straightens the butter knife." Through Aug. 23. . . . ¶ "Gordon Matta-Clark: Drawings Retrospective and Re-creation of Historic Projects." Through Aug. 30. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Summer hours: unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Mondays through Fridays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

PETER BEGLEY—Archetypal renderings of spare vistas (horizons with trees), done with a cave-painterly clarity. Through Aug. 28. (Salandar-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. 879-6606.)

PIERRE BONNARD (1867-1947)—Most of the drawings in this mixed exhibition are rough, throwaway sketches, except for a series of studies for a children's book, which exert an irresistible charm, and a suite of music-hall caricatures, from 1893, that possess all the vibrant energy of Toulouse-Lautrec's work from the same era and milieu. An exquisite still-life of a vase of flowers, painted in 1930, reminds us why this artist is worth

cherishing: the vivid splash of one crimson bloom anchors a symphony of whites, magically evoking a simultaneous mood of sadness and tranquillity. Through Oct. 10. (Wildenstein, 19 E. 64th St. 879-0500.)

SHIRLEY GOLDFARB (1925-80)—An American painter who lived in Paris the last thirty years of her life, Goldfarb was almost unknown in her native country during her lifetime; this exhibition suggests that we missed out on an interesting career. Influenced both by the color-field school and by French conceptual painters such as Yves Klein, she worked with a palette knife to apply pure color in ways that invite intellectual consideration even as they beguile the eye. A huge blue canvas, from 1970, has the retinal impact of a work by Klein, but, with its carefully incised knife lines laid out in a methodical grid, the painting is closer in spirit to minimalist drawings by Cy Twombly and his contemporaries. And "Lime & Purple" has many more colors than that, smeared in thumb-size swatches, like cross-sections of Venetian-glass paperweights. Through Sept. 4. (Zabriskie, 41 E. 57th St. 752-1223.)

"FIGURE DRAWINGS"—By Georg Baselitz, Jim Dine, Eric Fischl, Alice Neel, Ellen Phelan, and Wayne Thiebaud, among others. Through Sept. 11. (Danese, 41 E. 57th St. 223-2227.)

"A FLOWER IS TO THE SUMMER SWEET"—A bouquet of still-lives and other works with floral adornments, by Martin Johnson Heade, Frederick Carl Frieseke, Ethel Mars, Agnes Weinreich, Edna Boies Hopkins, and the Tucker porcelain factories. Through Sept. 25. (Hirsch & Adler, 21 E. 70th St. 535-8810.)

"HISTORIES (RE)MEMBERED"—The mountain comes to Manhattan: selections from the permanent collection of the Bronx Museum of the Arts, including work by Carrie Mae Weems, Lorna Simpson, Kara Walker, Glenn Ligon, and Luis Jiménez, make the midtown commute. Through Sept. 11. (PaineWebber Building, Sixth Ave. at 52nd St. 713-2885.)

"ON PAPER"—Works in many mediums by twenty-two artists from the past fifty years. There are striking contrasts: a totemic abstraction by Robert Motherwell, executed in a few deft strokes, and a laborious cartoon of a circus scene by Victor Vasarely before he Op'd out. Ellen Levy's "Paper Clips and Terriers" is a complex composition in charcoal and ink spray which creates a pattern of abstract monumentality reminiscent of a Piranesi prison interior. Helen Frankenthaler's abstract monotype, of what look like lumpy female bathers, has an uncharacteristically goofy charm. Carlo Maria Mariani's

large drawing of a classical female head, rendered in pencil and pastel with an almost Ingres-esque precision, sprouting a pair of coral antlers in watercolor, mocks the conventions of traditionally finished drawing. Through Aug. 28. (Associated American Artists, 20 W. 57th St. 399-5510.)

RECENT ACQUISITIONS—The Warhols are the standouts in this themeless summer show of contemporary American masters, particularly some whimsical drawings from the late fifties, before the artist found (and founded) Pop. The exhibition also includes a fine trio of pencil drawings by Larry Rivers, illustrating Jack Kerouac's "The Lonesome Traveller," and a witty cartoon of a hippopotamus, by Ellsworth Kelly. Through Sept. 12. (Sheehan, 20 W. 57th St. 489-3331.)

SHORT LIST—SHARI MENDELSON, St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 935-2200. Through Aug. 24. . . . **ROBERT EMMETT OWEN**, Spanierman, 45 E. 58th St. 832-0208. Through Aug. 22. . . . **KARA WALKER**, City College, Convent Ave. at 138th St. 650-8951. Open Mondays through Thursdays, 11 to 4; through Sept. 18. . . . **STEVE WHEELER**, York, 21 E. 65th St. 772-9155. Through Aug. 28.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

ROMIO SHRESTHA—Paintings that interpret Indian Ayurvedic medical tenets in images both fearsome and fanciful, by a Nepalese artist expert in traditional techniques of applying gold and lapis lazuli. Through Aug. 31. (Tibet House, 22 W. 15th St. 807-0563.)

"FROM HERE TO ETERNITY"—A survey of painting includes examples of conceptual abstraction (by Jonathan Lasker and Byron Kim), 3-D (by Jessica Stockholder and James Hyde), neo-Pop (by Thomas Nozkowski and Amy Sillman), and psychological portraiture (by Sean Mellyn, John Currin, and Lisa Yuskavage). Through Aug. 14. (Protetch, 511 W. 22nd St. 633-6999.)

"SMALL PAINTINGS"—Niche work, if you can get it, by Ingo Meller, Richmond Burton, Joan Mitchell, Juan Usle, and others. Through Aug. 28. (Cheim & Read, 521 W. 23rd St. 242-7727.)

SHORT LIST—VINNIE ANGEL, Kravets/Wehby, 529 W. 21st St. 352-2238. Through Aug. 28. . . . **JENNY WATSON**, Nosei, 530 W. 22nd St. 741-8695. Through Aug. 14.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

CHRIS JOHANSON—Lilliputian figures skulk down backstreets in this series of painted junk-pile constructions that owe more to back-yard forts than to Red Grooms. With just a few shaky lines scrawled on doors and boards, the San Francisco-based artist evokes inner-city decay and claustrophobia, but the heavy-handed writing (literally on the walls) about "vibes" and "trips" can jar you out of an otherwise charming Gulliver-like experience. Through Aug. 14. (Alleged, 28 Prince St. 966-4707.)

YAYOI KUSAMA—An exhibition of early works on paper by this prodigy, delicately gifted Japanese artist strengthens her steadily rising reputation. Dating to the early fifties, before Kusama came to New York, these small-format drawings range impressively from austere fields of black ink dots to brilliantly colored gouaches that hover between abstraction and figuration. Through Sept. 29. (Blum, 99 Wooster St. 343-0441.)

ALISON MORITSUGU—Landscapes in the tradition of Fantin-Latour, but with a twist: the vistas appear on the cut ends of log and branch sections, as if the felled trees themselves, were telling old secrets of sunnier days. Through Aug. 15. (Knowlton, 568 Broadway. 966-2625.)

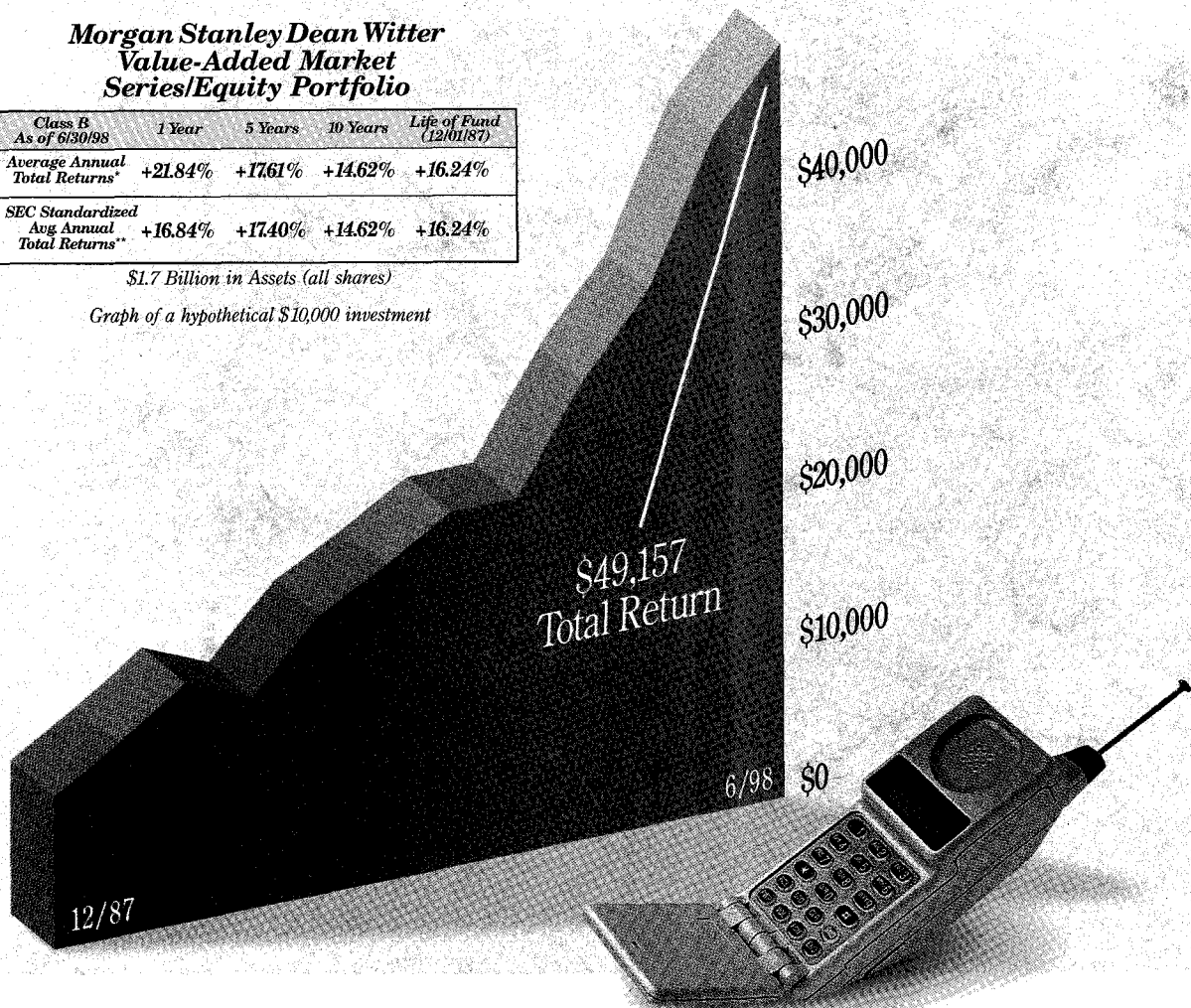
GEORGE SCHREIBER (1904-77) and **FRED SHANE** (1906-90)—Two artists associated with Thomas Hart Benton and the American Regionalism movement visited L.A. during the thirties and forties, where they wittily observed the bizarre confluence of the glamorous and the banal. In Shane's tempera

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"Movie Props" (1945), two crewmen pause for lunch on the back lot, surrounded by a Roman chariot, a Venetian gondola, the half-timbered façade of a Norman house, and two monumental sculptures of pagan idols. Schreiber's watercolor of the Warner Bros. studio canteen, tingling with colorful life, shows Bogart, Lombard, and Lubitsch chowing down with bit players in costume and a terrifying caricature of Hedda Hopper, in whose hands a teacup is a deadly weapon. Through Aug. 27. (Teller, 568 Broadway. 941-7335.)

GROUP SHOW—Black and gray dominate this summer show: a recent David Salle mixes, with what might pass for wit, images of a snare drum, a giant rabbit, a woman shading her eyes from the sun, and a Ferragamo window display. Robert Rauschenberg's "Philosopher's Night Circus," unified by a black acrylic-and-enamel ground, creepily conveys an atmosphere of insomniac despair. Against these paintings and an elegant pattern piece by Philip Taaffe, the pair of David Smith constructions, dating to the early sixties, strike an incongruously noble note. Through Aug. 28. (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St. 228-2828.)

SHORT LIST—ANN LOVETT, Dorsky, 379 Broadway. 966-6170. Through Aug. 28. ... **TOBIAS REHBERGER**, Petzel, 26 Wooster St. 334-9466. Through Aug. 28. ... **MASAMICHI TOHYAMA**, Wickiser, 568 Broadway. 941-1817. Through Sept. 10.

PHOTOGRAPHY

"COLOR"—Works by gallery artists Lynn Davis, Sally Mann, and Victor Schrager and guest artists Christopher Bucklow, Adam Fuss, and Dana Hoey. Through Aug. 14. (Houk, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 750-7070.)

"NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH"—Diverse takes on suburbia from Tracey Baran, Gregory Crewdson, Roe Etheridge, Arne Svenson, and others. Through Aug. 14. (Saul, 560 Broadway. 431-0747.)

"SHIP/SHAPE"—Nautical imagery by such European and American photographers as Doris Ulmann, Edward Steichen, Harold Costain, and Edward Prince of Wales. Through Aug. 29. (DeLellis, 47 E. 68th St. 327-1482. Closed Tuesdays.)

"SUMMER SALON V (PICTURES WE LIKE)"—Featuring photographs by Sylvia Plachy, Adam Baer, William Gottlieb, and Lissie Habie. Through Aug. 28. (Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. 517-3766.)

"SUR LA TÊTE"—Pictures that take the head as a focal point, by Edouard Boubat, Mario Cravo Neto, Michael von Graffenreid, and Graciela Iturbide. Through Aug. 28. (Witkin, 415 West Broadway. 925-5510.)

"TAKE THE A TRAIN"—A very large compendium of mostly black-and-white shots of the subways and trains of New York City by such photographers as Louis Faurer, William Klein, Louis Stettner, Walker Evans, Danny Lyon, and Helen Levitt. Through Aug. 14. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. 334-0010.)

"WALKER EVANS: THE MOMA MURALS"/"COUNTER CULTURE: THE DINER IN AMERICA"—Six mural-size prints made by the photographer for his 1971 museum retrospective. / Works by, among others, Garry Winogrand, William Klein, Weegee, and Ray K. Metzker. Both shows through Aug. 21. (Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. 226-1220.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY MIDTOWN—"Mathew Brady's Portraits: Images As History, Photography As Art," a travelling show of more than a hundred daguerreotypes, albumen prints, "Imperial" salted-paper prints, and cartes de visite. Through Sept. 6. ...

¶ "A Bronx Family Album: The Impact of AIDS, by Steve Hart." Through Sept. 6. (Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. 860-1777. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

GROUP SHOW—Serial work by John Coplans, Wolfgang Tillmans, Vibeke Tandberg, and Dexter Buell. Through Aug. 21. (Rosen, 525 W. 24th St. 627-6000.)

SHORT LIST—HERMAN COSTA, Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4819. Through Aug. 14. ... **LUCIEN HERVÉ**, Gallery 292, at 120 Wooster St. 431-0292. Through Aug. 14. ... **DON JAMES** and **WILLIAM DASSONVILLE**, Danziger, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. 734-5300. Both shows through Aug. 14. ... **MICHAEL KENNA**, Mann, 42 E. 76th St. 570-1223. Through Aug. 14. ... **NINA KORHONEN**, SABA, 116 E. 16th St. 477-7722. Through Aug. 31. ... **ALEXANDER ROCHENKO**, Schickler, 560 Broadway. 431-6363. Through Aug. 14. ... **LINDA TROELLER**, Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. 505-5555. Through Sept. 12.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

IN TOWN

MOSTLY MOZART—Aug. 12 at 6:30: An outdoor recital by the Leontóvych String Quartet includes quartets by Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert. (North Plaza, Lincoln Center.) ...

¶ Aug. 12 at 8: Ivor Bolton conducts the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra in an all-Mozart concert, comprising the Overture to "Der Schauspielfeldirektor," the C-Major Piano Concerto (K. 503, with Louis Lortie), the Violin Concerto No. 3 (featuring Christian Tetzlaff), and the Symphony No. 34. (Avery Fisher Hall.) ... ¶ Aug. 13 at 8: Arrangements of music by Mozart and others, performed by the Canadian Brass. (Avery Fisher Hall.) ... ¶ Aug. 14 at 8: The Festival Orchestra, conducted by Carlos Kalmar, performs Mozart's ballet music from "Idomeno," C-Minor Piano Concerto (with Alexei Lubimov), and Symphony No. 36 (the "Linz"), as well as Rossini's

(Aug. 12) and the Colorado String Quartet (Aug. 13-15). (Alice Tully Hall. Evenings at 6.) (For information about tickets for all Mostly Mozart events, call 721-6500.)

RUSSIAN CHAMBER CHORUS OF NEW YORK—Nikolai Kachanov directs Tchaikovsky's "Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom." (Trinity Church, Broadway at Wall St. Aug. 13 at 1. No tickets necessary.)

ALEXEI LUBIMOV—The Russian pianist performs excerpts from Scriabin's final work, "L'Acte Préalable" ("The Prefatory Action") and lectures on the mystical composer. Scriabin intended the work to stand as the opening section of a cosmic, theosophical synthesis of the arts and the senses called "Mysterium," which he hoped to have performed high in the Himalayas. He had completed only fragmentary sketches by the time of his death, in 1915, but the composer Alexander Nemtin later arranged Scriabin's ideas and supplemented them with passages from some of the composer's other late works, to create a realization that was first presented to the Moscow public in 1973, under the title "Universe." (Steinway Hall, 109 W. 57th St. Aug. 13 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 877-7843.)

BARGEMUSIC—Aug. 13 at 7:30 and Aug. 16 at 4: Violinist Christiaan Bor, cellist Ronald Thomas, and pianist Randall Hodgkinson perform Russian piano trios, by Shostakovich (his First, in C Minor), Arensky, and Tchaikovsky. ... ¶ Aug. 14 at 7:30: Inbal Segev plays Bach's D-Minor Suite for Unaccompanied Cello, violinist Jennifer Frautschi and pianist Mihai Lee offer Beethoven's C-Minor Violin Sonata (Op. 30, No. 2), and all come together for Ravel's Piano Trio. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061.)

NON SEQUITUR FESTIVAL—Three evenings of the new and unusual. Aug. 13: The six-member band CAMP, with guest vocalist Sara Wendt (borrowed for the evening from the band Homer Erotic), performs pieces by Randall Woolf (the group's founder), Ann Klein, and Kitty Brazelton. ...

¶ Aug. 14: A toy-piano recital by Wendy Mae Chambers. ... ¶ Aug. 15: Eighteen musicians collaborate with the audience in a "reinterpretation" of that indelible classic "Ninety-nine Bottles of Beer on the Wall." (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202. Evenings at 8.)

SUMMERGARDEN—The Museum of Modern Art's summer series, which this year explores twentieth-century music by

New York composers, presents piano trios by Wuorinen, Ives, and Earle Brown (his "Music for Violin, Cello, and Piano"), in addition to Carman Moore's "Berenice—Fantasy on a Theme of G. F. Handel" (for piano trio with clarinet). (Museum of Modern Art, Sculpture Garden, 14 W. 54th St. Aug. 14-15 at 8:30. No tickets necessary.)

"SUNDAYS ON THE ISLAND"—This week's concert comprises Beethoven's Septet and a Pergolesi trio sonata. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. Aug. 16 at noon. For information about tickets, call 718-885-2478.)

RICHARD KOGAN—Aug. 16 at 6 and 8: The pianist performs Bach's Partita No. 1, in addition to works by Chopin and Debussy. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. No tickets necessary.) ... ¶ Aug. 17 at 8: Stravinsky's "Trois Scènes de 'Pétrouchka,'"



Violinist Christian Tetzlaff, at Mostly Mozart.

Introduction, Theme, and Variations for Clarinet and Orchestra (featuring Richard Stoltzman) and an arrangement of his celebrated aria "Bel Raggio Lusinghier," for the same forces. (Avery Fisher Hall.) ... ¶ Aug. 15 at 8: The same program as the preceding, except with Schubert's "Unfinished" Symphony instead of Mozart's "Linz." (Avery Fisher Hall.) ... ¶ Aug. 18-19 at 8: Gerard Schwarz leads the Festival Orchestra in Beethoven's Symphony No. 2, Mendelssohn's Piano Concerto No. 1 (with Jean-Yves Thibaudet), and Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante for Winds (K. 297b). (Avery Fisher Hall.) ... **NOTE:** Pre-concert recitals, open to ticket holders, begin at 7 every concert evening. ... **NOTE, TOO:** Mostly Mozart's series of hour-long concerts devoted to quartets by Haydn concludes this week with performances by the Amernet String Quartet

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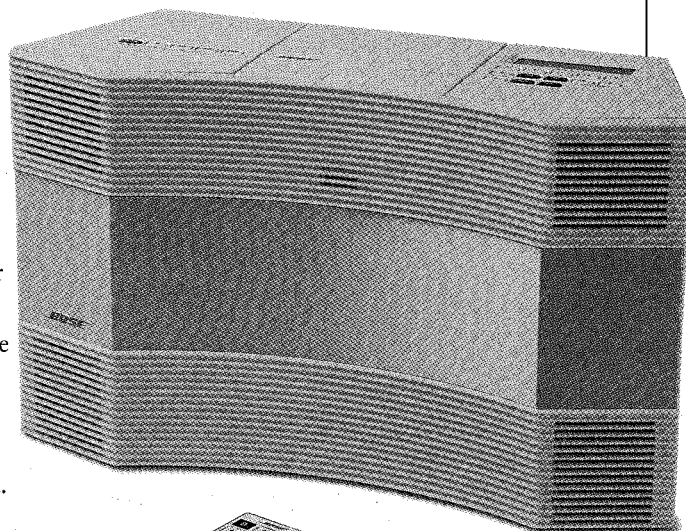


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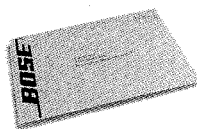


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OUT OF TOWN

BRIDGEHAMPTON CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL—Aug. 12 at 8: An all-Bach concert, comprising his G-Major Trio Sonata (BWV 1039), C-Minor Suite for Unaccompanied Cello, A-Minor Flute Concerto, A-Minor Sonata for Unaccompanied Violin, and "Brandenburg" Concerto No. 5.... **Aug. 15 at 8:** Readings from Mozart's letters amplify performances of his G-Major Serenade ("Eine Kleine Nachtmusik"), F-Minor Adagio and Fugue (which he arranged from a work by W. F. Bach), C-Major String Quartet (K. 157), G-Major Flute Quartet (actually an arrangement, by Franz Anton Hoffmeister, of Mozart's F-Major Piano Sonata, K. 533), and D-Major Sonata for Two Pianos (K. 375a). (Bridgehampton Presbyterian Church, Montauk Highway, Bridgehampton, N.Y. 516-537-6368.)

TANGLEWOOD—Aug. 12 at 8:30: The Guarneri Quartet plays Beethoven's Quartets in E-Flat Major (Op. 127) and F Major (Op. 18, No. 1), as well as Barber's Quartet.... **Aug. 13 at 8:30:** The same foursome offers Beethoven's Quartets in C Minor (Op. 18, No. 4) and F Major (Op. 135), as well as Bartók's Quartet No. 6.... **Aug. 14 at 8:30:** André Previn leads the Boston Symphony in Brahms's Violin Concerto (with Joshua Bell) and Rachmaninoff's Symphony No. 3.... **Aug. 15 at 8:30:** The Boston Symphony, conducted by Richard Westerfield, performs Adams's "Slonimsky's Earbox," Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 5 (featuring Horacio Gutiérrez), and Sibelius's Symphony No. 5.... **Aug. 16 at 2:30:** Hans Graf conducts the Boston Symphony in Mozart's Symphony No. 38 (the "Prague") and a pair of his arias (with mezzo-soprano Susan Graham), as well as Chopin's "Variations on Mozart's 'Là ci darem la mano'" (featuring pianist Garrick Ohlsson) and Strauss's tone poem "Don Juan." (Lenox, Mass. 800-274-8499.)

GLIMMERGLASS OPERA—Aug. 13 at 8, Aug. 15 at 1:30, and Aug. 18 at 2: Virgil Thomson's "The Mother of Us All."... **Aug. 14 at 8 and Aug. 17 at 2:** "Falstaff."... **Aug. 15 at 8:** "Tosca."... **Aug. 16 at 2:** Handel's "Partenope," with soprano Lisa Saffer and countertenor David Daniels.... **Aug. 16 at 8:30:** The premiere of Deborah Drattell's opera "Lilith," in a concert version, with soprano Lauren Flanigan heading the cast. (Cooperstown, N.Y. 607-547-2255.)

BARD MUSIC FESTIVAL—Performers, scholars, and the musically curious make their way to the Hudson Valley for two weekends every August for total immersion, with words and music, in the works of a single composer. This year's subject is Tchaikovsky, whose up-and-down reputation is flying high right now, thanks to renewed interest among concert programmers, critics, and musicologists, who all seem enamored of anything Russian and anyone gay—and Tchaikovsky was both. **Aug. 14 at 8:30:** The opening concert features chamber works, including some obscure ones: the Adagio for Four Horns, the vocal quartet "Nicht" (based on Mozart's C-Minor Fantasy), and the celebrated string sextet "Souvenir de Florence."... **Aug. 15 at 10 A.M.:** A roundtable on Tchaikovsky's love life and the much disputed issues surrounding his death.... **Aug. 15 at 2:** The Colorado String Quartet plays Tchaikovsky's Quartet No. 3 in a concert that also includes solo and chamber works by Arensky and Taneyev, both of whom were encouraged by Tchaikovsky.... **Aug. 15 at 8:** Leon Botstein leads the Bard Festival Orchestra in Tchaikovsky's overture "The Storm," Sophie Menter's piano-and-orchestra arrangement of his "Hungarian Gypsy Airs," Borodin's incomplete Symphony No. 3, Glazunov's Symphony No. 5, and Stravinsky's Divertimento

from "Le Baiser de la Fée" (based on themes by Tchaikovsky)... **Aug. 16 at 10 A.M.:** A panel discussion about Russian musical education and compositional style.... **Aug. 16 at 11:30:** The Russian Chamber Chorus of New York, directed by Nikolai Kachanov, offers Tchaikovsky's "Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom."... **Aug. 16 at 2:30:** Piano and chamber works by Tchaikovsky's nationalist contemporaries "The Mighty Five": Balakirev, Mussorgsky, Borodin, Cui, and Rimsky-Korsakov. (Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y. 914-758-3226. The festival continues through Aug. 23. ... **NOTE:** Pre-performance lectures begin a half hour before most concerts.)

MAYERICK CONCERTS—Aug. 15 at 8: A program by lutenist Ronn McFarlane includes song elaborations by Dowland, Silvio Leopold Weiss's Sonata No. 1, and selections from the late-seventeenth-century Balcarres Lute Book.... **Aug. 16 at 3:** The Penderecki String Quartet performs the Quartet No. 2 of its namesake, Krzysztof Penderecki, as well as quartets by Beethoven (in F Major, Op. 135), Debussy, and Shostakovich (his Eleventh). (Woodstock, N.Y. 914-679-8217.)

MUSIC MOUNTAIN—The Wiham String Quartet concludes its two-weekend residency at this three-hundred-and-thirty-five-seat hall by performing quartets by Beethoven (in C Major, Op. 59, No. 3) and Dvořák (in E-Flat Major, Op. 51), as well as Mozart's G-Minor Piano Quartet (with pianist Pamela Mia Paul assisting). (Falls Village, Conn. 860-824-7126. Aug. 16 at 3.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

SKY HIGH—More than seventy-five hot-air balloons will ascend above Long Island this weekend during the Waldbaum's 1998 Balloon Festival. Held at Brookhaven Airport, the festival features balloons from around the country as well as such specially shaped examples as the Energizer Bunny, Mr. Peanut, and a Waldbaum's shopping bag. Balloon fliers will compete for more than twenty-five thousand dollars in prize money in "hare and hound" races, in which one balloon lifts off first and drops a large X on the ground; the other competitors then take off and try to drop a numbered beanbag as close to the X as possible. In addition, there will be musical performances by the Coasters, the Drifters, the Platters, and the Beach Boys; fireworks displays; and barnstorming air shows complete with a trio of skydiving Elvis impersonators. Hold on to your hat. (Shirley, N.Y. Aug. 14-16. For more information, including schedules and directions, call 888-994-6824.)

NEW MASTERS—The folks at Christie's, who are accustomed to handling works by Old Masters, modernists, and other fine artists, present their own art works at the fourteenth annual staff art show. Sculptures, paintings, photographs, drawings, collages, and video works by some forty-five employees are on view. (Christie's East, 219 E. 67th St. 606-0400. Aug. 17-21, from 10 to 5.)

READINGS—Aug. 12 at 6: By poets Robert Hershon and Frank Lima. (Union Square Park, Broadway at 17th St. No tickets necessary.)... **Aug. 12 at 7:** By poet Timothy Liu, from his collection "Say Goodnight." (A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. No tickets necessary.)... **Aug. 16 at 4:** Ayow & Friends, a troupe of Caribbean poets, joins South African master drummer and storyteller Mogauwane Mahloele and others for an evening of words, music, and dance, emceed by writer Jack Silbert. (Pier 54, West St. at 13th St. No tickets necessary.)

WALK—Aug. 15 at 11 A.M.: Pratt Institute professor of urban sociology Errol T. Louis leads a stroll through Clinton Hill, where Richard Wright wrote "Native Son," and Fort Greene, home of jazz greats Max Roach and Betty Carter. For more information, call 718-788-8549.

BOOK CURRENTS

The King's Memphis

IN the recently published **ELVIS PRESLEY: A LIFE IN MUSIC** (St. Martin's), Ernst Jorgensen's comprehensive and scholarly guide to the singer's recording career, the author reminds us that when Elvis was a thirteen-year-old, fresh from Tupelo, he found music the way pilgrims to Memphis always have, and



still do: "in the churches, in the juke joints, on street corners, on the radio, wherever friends gathered." The anniversary of Elvis's death (twenty-one years ago this week) is an occasion to look at an assortment of books that explore the richly musical streets and alleys of Elvis's adopted—and immensely nurturing—home town.

In **MEMPHIS BEAT** (St. Martin's), Larry Nager, a former music columnist for the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, suggests that the Bluff City's black-and-white melting pot helped cook up nearly every form of American vernacular music: blues, jazz, gospel, R. & B., country, and rock and roll have all taken a stroll down Beale Street, once known as the "Main Street of Negro America."

Robert Gordon veers off Beale Street in **IT CAME FROM MEMPHIS** (Faber and Faber), an affectionate rumination on the city's lesser-known cultural oddballs. Among the musicians, disk jockeys, and Quaalude-addled bodyguards we find "The World's Most Perfectly Formed Midget Wrestler," who—since everything in Memphis leads back to music—turns out to be the twelve-year-old son of Sam Phillips, the wild-eyed Sun Records prophet who recorded Howlin' Wolf, B. B. King, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis, Roy Orbison, and, of course, Elvis.

After the original Sun studio closed down, in 1959, Stax Records opened in a converted movie theatre and became the promised land for black artists from all over the South. In **SOULSVILLE U.S.A.** (Schirmer), Rob Bowman chronicles the saga of Stax, which, during the heat of the civil-rights struggle, launched the careers of Booker T. and the MGs, Otis Redding, Sam and Dave, Carla Thomas, and Isaac Hayes. It was at Stax in 1973 that the Aztec-jumpsuited Elvis, returning from stints in Vegas and Hawaii, recorded the aptly titled "Raised on Rock."

DOUG ALLEN

Books.

[AT BARNES & NOBLE]

FOR KINGS AND PLANETS

.....
by Ethan Canin

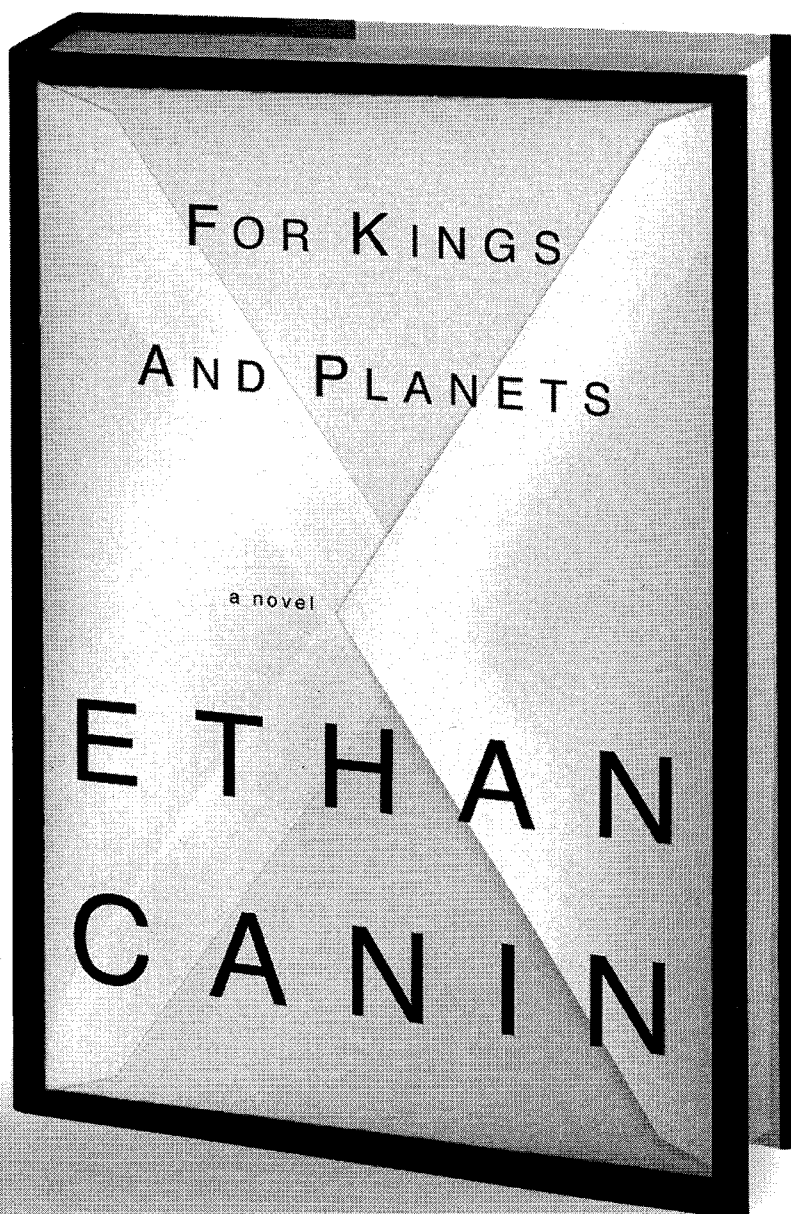
Two men from disparate backgrounds and heading down different roads form a lifelong friendship when they meet as freshmen at Columbia University. *For Kings and Planets* is a wonderfully written tale about human relationships and the choices that unite and divide us as we traverse the twists and turns of our own lives. With his third novel, Ethan Canin, acclaimed author of *The Palace Thief* and *Emperor of the Air*, affirms his place among America's finest writers.

(Random House)

Publisher's Price: \$24.95

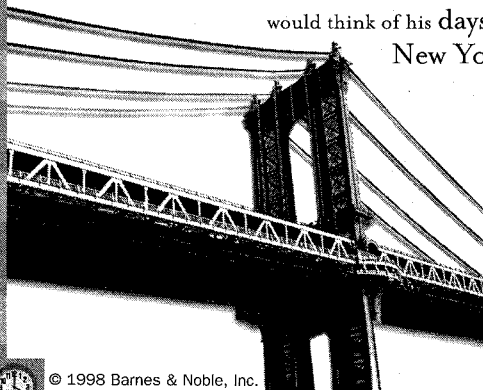
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"Years later, Orno Tarcher
would think of his days in
New York as seduction."

—Excerpt from *For Kings and Planets*



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OPENINGS

AIR BUD: GOLDEN RECEIVER—Buddy the golden retriever takes to the football field; directed by Richard Martin. Opening Aug. 14.

THE AVENGERS—John Steed and Emma Peel (Ralph Fiennes and Uma Thurman) must foil Sir August De Wynter (Sean Connery), who may have found a way to control the weather; directed by Jeremiah Chechik. Opening Aug. 14. (Coronet Cinemas, Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

THE BEST MAN—A return-of-the-native story about a young man who goes back to his Italian village and disrupts a wedding. Directed by Pupi Avati. In Italian. Opening Aug. 14. (Eastside Playhouse and Quad Cinema.)

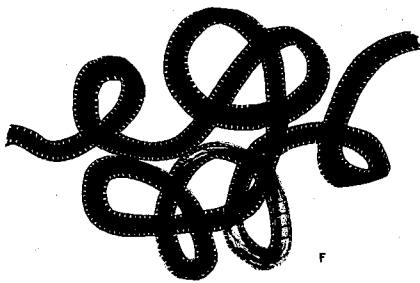
THE CHAMBERMAID ON THE TITANIC—Reviewed below in Film Notes. Opening Aug. 14.

HENRY: PORTRAIT OF A SERIAL KILLER 2—A serial killer and an arsonist join forces in this thriller written and directed by Chuck Parello. Opening Aug. 14. (Angelika Film Center.)

HOW STELLA GOT HER GROOVE BACK—Director Kevin Rodney Sullivan's film, taken from Terry McMillan's novel, about a woman who falls in love with a man half her age. With Angela Bassett, Taye Diggs, and Whoopi Goldberg. Opening Aug. 14.

REGENERATION—Jonathan Pryce, James Wilby, Stuart Bunce, and Jonny Lee Miller star in this adaptation of the Pat Barker novel about soldiers, shell-shocked from the hor-

THE MOVIES



FILM NOTES

(If a movie has been reviewed recently in *The Current Cinema*, the date of its review is given.)

BILLY'S HOLLYWOOD SCREEN KISS—Billy (Sean P. Hayes) proudly announces: "I am a homosexual, a film buff with a penchant for women's melodramas." An unemployed photographer, Billy goes around Los Angeles taking snapshots of everyone and complains about his unsatisfying love life to a female friend named, confusingly, George (Meredith Scott Lynn). When he spies the great-looking Gabriel (Brad Rowe) in a coffeehouse, he decides that the waiter is the perfect lead for his series of classic Hollywood screen kisses, to be photographed with an all-male (half-drag) cast. The movie's strengths are stylistic, from its over-

film by liberating Horty (and us) from that dingy bar and its drooling patrons. To our relief, the director Bigas Luna's earnest concentration on sexual obsession and jealousy is replaced by a comical and prescient examination of post-Titanic showbiz. In French.—*Ken Marks* (Quad Cinema and Sutton; starting Aug. 14.)

EAST PALACE, WEST PALACE—In a park in a Chinese city, the cops roust the young gay men who gather there. When they are apart from the others, A-Lan suddenly gives the policeman escorting him a kiss on the cheek and jogs off, looking playfully over his shoulder. The conflicted look on the cop's face pretty much tells us where this picture is heading. The cop returns a few days later, brings A-Lan back to the empty police station, and a nightlong interrogation ensues. Or is it a seduction? Director Zhang Yuan's feature erupts in a flash of passion, but the payoff isn't worth the wait. In Chinese.—*K.M.* (Quad Cinema.)

EVER AFTER—A sumptuous retelling of the Cinderella tale, with Drew Barrymore as the feisty stepdaughter and Anjelica Huston as the conniving stepmother who wants to marry her own daughter off to the handsome prince (Dougray Scott). The film swings from farce to soap opera and back again—but it's got enough girl-power moments to make a Spice Girls fan happy. Barrymore is sweet and amusing, but Huston gives the memorable performance—she swoops down on every actor's line like a hawk, leaving only gristle.—*Bruce Diones* (Beekman, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, 19th Street East 6, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Waverly.)

GREMLINS 2 THE NEW BATCH (1990)—The director, Joe Dante, and his team (which includes the screenwriter Charlie Haas and the effects supervisor Rick Baker) have made a multi-million-dollar, special-effects-crammed picture that has the loose, improvisatory feel of the great Warner Bros. cartoons of the forties and fifties. They're fearless and indefatigable gagsters, and the movie is smarter, wilder, and more unfettered than the original "Gremlins" (1984). The gremlins indulge their rampaging consumption in a state-of-the-art Manhattan office building and mall called the Clamp Centre. This towering steel-and-glass wedge is a monument to the runaway acquisitiveness of the eighties, and by the time the little monsters have chomped and guzzled (and sung and danced) their way through its cheerless offices and boutiques, Dante and his collaborators have trashed quite a few of the most unattractive aspects of life in these United States. In its adolescent way, the movie's almost subversive: a high-spirited combination of Looney Tunes principles and Dante's own manic pop-culture-in-a-blender sensibility. Much of the first film's cast is back, and the animated pre-credit sequence, featuring Daffy Duck and Bugs Bunny, was written and directed by Chuck Jones, who made some of the greatest Warners cartoons.—*Terrence Rafferty* (American Museum of the Moving Image; Aug. 15.)

HALLOWEEN: H20—The title of Steve Miner's new film raises hopes that Michael Myers, everybody's favorite bogeyman from "Halloween," might return to Haddonfield, Illinois, and spend the whole of the movie in public swimming pools; sadly, it refers to nothing more outré than the twenty years that have passed since John Carpenter's original shocker. Most of the innumerable sequels were tripe, but this one has a freshness—even a kind of wit—mixed in with all the blood. It also has Jamie Lee Curtis, who was always the mainstay of the "Halloween" saga at its best. Her character, Laurie, has now found a job as the headmistress of a school in California. Myers tracks her down, wasting a few disposable teen-agers on the way; finally, Laurie and her nemesis come face to face, or, at any rate, face to mask. The movie is not the exercise in undiluted fright that Carpenter gave us; nor, perhaps,



Taye Diggs and Angela Bassett in "How Stella Got Her Groove Back."

rors of the First World War, convalescing in a Scottish hospital. Directed by Gillies MacKinnon. Opening Aug. 14. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

RETURN TO PARADISE—A drama about whether one young man will die for a crime he and two others have committed. With Vince Vaughn, Joaquin Phoenix, David Conrad, Anne Heche, and Jada Pinkett Smith; directed by Joseph Ruben. Opening Aug. 14. (Village East Cinemas.)

SUMS OF BEVERLY HILLS—Writer-director Tamara Jenkins' dark comedy of growing up poor in 1976 California. With Alan Arkin, Marisa Tomei, Natasha Lyonne, and Kevin Corrigan. Opening Aug. 14. (Angelika Film Center and Cinema I.)

WAR ZONE—Maggie Hadleigh-West's film documents verbal harassment of women on the streets of New York, San Francisco, Chicago, and New Orleans. Opening Aug. 12. (Film Forum.)

saturated Frida Kahlo colors to its clever use of old-fashioned camera devices. But once you've appreciated the campy details—the matching tones of turquoise in the drag queen's dress, eyeshadow, and lipstick; a pair of earrings made of CDs—you may find yourself longing for the angst-ridden homosexuals of old. With Holly Woodlawn.—*Daphne Merkin* (7/27/98) (Angelika Film Center, 19th Street East 6, and 62nd & Broadway.)

THE CHAMBERMAID ON THE TITANIC—Horty (Olivier Martinez) earns drinks and tips telling heavy-breathing, erotic stories, mostly fanciful, to his foundry mates in a bar back home in Lorraine. It's April, 1912, and he's just returned from Southampton, England, where he spent one night with Marie (Aitana Sánchez Gijón)—the night before the Titanic sailed. Zeppe (Aldo Maccione), a travelling actor, arrives, sees Horty's potential as a big-time earner on the circuit, and saves the

should we expect it to be. Viewers of this stuff are less innocent than ever before, and Miner trades efficiently on their knowing glee.—*Anthony Lane* (Reviewed in *A Critic at Large*, 8/10/98.) (Astor Plaza, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village East Cinemas.)

THE MASK OF ZORRO—Antonio Banderas cuts a dashing figure as Johnston McCulley's Robin Hood-like hero, but director Martin Campbell's lumpy direction doesn't coalesce into anything much beyond a pleasant assembly of set pieces. Still, there are some wonderful moments, particularly Banderas's rousing sword-play-as-foreplay scenes with his gorgeous co-star, Catherine Zeta-Jones, and his flamboyantly choreographed duelling scenes with the glinty-eyed Anthony Hopkins, who trains Banderas like a Jedi Knight.—*B.D.* (84th Street Sixplex, 19th Street East 6, Olympia, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, State, 34th Street Showplace, and Village East Cinemas.)

THE NEGOTIATOR—F. Gary Gray, the young director of the 1996 female heist film "Set It Off," runs with a good script (by James DeMonaco and Kevin Fox) and gives us the summer's first action film that's as rich in character as it is in suspense. The tension-filled plot—a hostage negotiator (Samuel L. Jackson) takes some hostages of his own while another police strategist (Kevin Spacey) tries to persuade him to give up—allows ample room for two well-modulated performances. The movie is packed with terrific supporting roles—David Morse, Regina Taylor, Ron Rifkin, and particularly the late J. T. Walsh all shine.—*B.D.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Showplace, and Village East Cinemas.)

THE PARENT TRAP—If you didn't know better, you might think that Martha Stewart was behind this remake of the classic Hayley Mills trifle about identical twins trying to reunite their divorced parents. This time around, the twins' father (Dennis Quaid) is a vintner with a palatial spread in Napa Valley, while Mom (Natasha Richardson, looking like Emma Thompson) is a famous London wedding-gown designer. Director Nancy Meyers seems to be aiming at an audience of acquisitive baby boomers, not kids; she makes us salivate over china and lush gardens, and resentful of the human beings who are blocking our view. A clever young redhead named Lindsay Lohan holds her own as the twins, one well-bred English and one tomboy—but no one can gush like the irreplaceable Mills.—*Sarah Kerr* (Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema I, Guild, Lincoln Square, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Village East Cinemas.)

POT-BOUILLE (1957)—The protagonist of Julien Duvivier's lavish satire on the triumph of business values over bourgeois morals is an unscrupulous young fortune hunter from the provinces who climbs to respectability over the beds of satisfied bourgeois ladies. Duvivier's re-creation of Paris in the overstuffed eighteen-eighties is one of the most unusual historical evocations in movies: ugly, ludicrous, conspicuous expenditure dominates the enormous apartment house, the shops, the streets. Duvivier keeps his balance on the tightrope over the dangerous material—human mediocrity, bad taste, the middle-class man as animal—but sometimes you may get the feeling that the tightrope is suspended much too low. Gérard Philipe is the dimply, curly-haired seducer, the man who accepts venality so simply and instinctively that he has no need of hypocrisy. With Danielle Darrieux, Dany Carrel, and Anouk Aimée. In French.—*Pauline Kael* (Florence Gould Hall; Aug. 18.)

SAVING PRIVATE RYAN—Steven Spielberg's new picture, one of his best, is a sandwich. The meat of the tale concerns a bunch of U.S. Army Rangers, led by Captain John Miller (Tom Hanks), who are sent into Normandy to rescue Ryan (Matt Damon), the sole survivor of four brothers. On either side of this bold endeavor you get half an hour of un-

yielding combat: first, the D Day landings on Omaha Beach, and later, a consummate last stand in which too few Americans try to hold an inland bridge against too many Germans and too many tanks. Most viewers will be impressed but unsurprised by the central section; it feels wrought, and finely scripted (by Robert Rodat), and nudged by sentimentality. The reason that they will carry the movie lodged in their minds is the infernal, brain-shaking quality of the battle scenes; Spielberg obviously decided that blood and guts meant just that, and so he arranged his violence into a semblance of pure disorder. The illusion holds, complete with severed limbs and wellsprings of blood, and it feels honorable; Spielberg's preachy movies can be an awful grind, but, apart from a disposable coda, this new work is too swift (and often too inaudible) to weigh you down. It feels like an atonement for the sins of "Amistad."—*A.L.* (8/3/98) (Chelsea West, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, Murray Hill Cinemas, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, Village Theatre VII, and Ziegfeld.)

SEVENTH HEAVEN—Benoît Jacquot's latest excavation of the female psyche stars Sandrine Kiberlain as the mopey, sexually unfulfilled young wife of a Paris surgeon. A hypnotist unlocks painful memories and helps her to feel desire again, but this terrifies her husband (Vincent Lindon), who's grown used to drawing strength from her weakness. As usual, Jacquot is hyperintelligent, technically brilliant, and a little too proud of his seriousness. One longs for some levity, or, at the very least, less hairsplitting discussion of the difference between "charm" and "gratification." In French.—*S.K.* (Quad Cinema.)

SMOKE SIGNALS—Chris Eyre's doleful comedy follows two young Coeur d'Alene Indians (Adam Beach and Evan Adams) from their Idaho reservation to Phoenix, where the father of one of them has suddenly died, poor and alone. One is a stud and the other a misfit,

and at times the odd-couple pairing flirts with sitcom cuteness. But the scenes on the reservation are bursting with fresh detail, and one comes away realizing how rare it is to see a film in which modern-day Native Americans are portrayed with care or accuracy—let alone a film about the struggling poor.—*S.K.* (Angelika Film Center and Gotham Cinema.)

SNAKE EYES—Brian De Palma's thriller about an assassination that takes place during a boxing match. With Nicolas Cage, Gary Sinise, John Heard, and Carla Gugino; written by David Koepp. (Reviewed this week in *The Current Cinema*.) (Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, East 85th Street, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, Olympia, 72nd Street East, and State.)

STAGE DOOR (1937)—One of the flashiest, most entertaining comedies of the thirties, even with its tremolos and touches of heart-break. As roommates in a New York boarding house for girls aspiring to a stage career, Katharine Hepburn and Ginger Rogers are terrific wisecracking partners. (Rogers, at her liveliest, holds her own with apparent ease.) The other girls waiting for their lucky breaks include Eve Arden (who wears a cat around her neck like a tippet), Lucille Ball, Ann Miller, Andrea Leeds, and Gail Patrick. The cast includes the supremely regal (and supremely funny) Constance Collier as an aged actress who does coaching, Adolphe Menjou as a producer with a roving eye, and Franklin Pangborn as his valet. Directed by Gregory La Cava; from the Broadway hit by George S. Kaufman and Edna Ferber.—*P.K.* (Bryant Park; Aug. 17.)

TARZAN'S NEW YORK ADVENTURE (1942)—Herman/she-woman fantasy at its most beguiling. When a ruthless hunter and promoter (Charles Bickford) sees Boy (John Sheffield) make elephants perform like the Rockettes, he whisks him away to an American circus. This entices Johnny Weissmuller's take-charge Tarzan to leave his African paradise for the jungle of New



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York, where Maureen O'Sullivan's appreciative Jane takes charge of him (otherwise, he'd shower in his suit). Neither a Manhattan judge nor the Brooklyn Bridge can stop Tarzan from saving Boy; along the way, Cheeta the chimp cavorts like a Roman clown—or Jim Carrey—while Weissmuller and O'Sullivan exchange tumid glances. Richard Thorpe directed; William R. Lipman and Myles Connolly wrote the script.—*Michael Sragow* (Walter Reade Theatre; Aug. 15-16.)

THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MARY

—The Farrelly Brothers, who have tipped the outrageousness scale before ("Dumb and Dumber," "Kingpin"), come up with some great new gross-out gags in this romantic comedy. The star, Cameron Diaz, in her Olivia Newton-John haircut, is the perfect naïve foil—she looks like she never knows what hit her. As the two loopy guys who are in love with her, Matt Dillon and Ben Stiller are garishly charming and full of desperate and irreverent ploys to get the girl. The film is packed with tasteless jokes (the best of them are crudely sexual), and it has a refreshing mean-spiritedness.—*B.D.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Showplace, and Village East Cinemas.)

THE THIEF—Considering that Pavel Chukhrai's movie is set in the Soviet Union in the early nineteen-fifties, it's pretty easy to watch. The center of events is a young boy (Misha Philipchuk), whose mother takes up with a handsomely immoral soldier called Tolyan (Vladimir Mashkov). The three of them scoot from one set of lodgings to the next, armed with little but a sack of stolen silverware; the movie is, among other things, a dark Dickensian comedy of the nomadic—of the need to live on one's wits. As the film moves, rather too hastily, toward its resolution, you might feel cheated by a sense of emotional patness; for the most part, however, there is real grit and sting in this slight tale. In Russian.—*A.L.* (7/20/98) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

WESTERN—French New New Wave director Manuel Poirier's charming road movie, in which a Mutt and Jeff pair of guys yo-yo their way up and down the coast of Brittany. Paco (Sergi López), a Spanish shoe salesman, picks up a shiftless Russian hitchhiker, Nino (Sacha Bourdo, in his first film role), who contrives to steal his car. When Paco catches up with Nino, he pounds the crap out of him. Naturally, he feels remorse, and before you know it, the two have become road buddies. Their picaresque misadventures take them genially through the polycultural France that was evident during the World Cup matches. In French.—*Jeff Gustavson* (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

ALSO PLAYING

ARMAGEDDON (reviewed in our issue of 7/13/98): Chelsea Cinemas, Embassy 2, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, Sutton, and Village Theatre VII. ... **BUFFALO '66**: (Angelika Film Center, Cinema 3rd Avenue, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. ... **DISTURBING BEHAVIOR**: Chelsea Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, State, and Waverly. ... **GADJO DILO**: Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. ... **GONE WITH THE WIND**: Sutton. ... **THE GOVERNESS**: Paris. ... **THE LAST DAYS OF DISCO** (6/15/98): Worldwide Cinemas. ... **LETHAL**



Opening August 14, Catherine Deneuve and Françoise Dorléac in Jacques Demy's "The Young Girls of Rochefort."

WEAPON 4: Coronet Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, State, and Village Theatre VII. ... **MAFIA!**: Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema II, Embassy 1, Lincoln Square, and Village East Cinemas. ... **MARK TWAIN'S AMERICA**: Lincoln Square. ... **NIGHTS OF CABIRIA**: Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema. ... **OUT OF SIGHT** (7/6/98): Art Greenwich Twin and, Lincoln Square. ... **PI**: Angelika Film Center. ... **SAFE MEN**: Angelika Film Center and First & 62nd Cinemas. ... **THE SPANISH PRISONER** (4/13/98): Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Village East Cinemas. ... **TITANIC** (12/15/97): Worldwide Cinemas. ... **UNMADE BEDS**: The Screening Room.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

FILM FORUM 2 AND 3, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—**THEATRE 2**: Through Aug. 13: "Festival" (1967, Murray Lerner). ... From Aug. 14: "The Lady from Shanghai" (1948, Orson Welles). ... **THEATRE 3**: Through Aug. 13: "The Saltmen of Tibet" (1997, Ulrike Koch). ... From Aug. 14: "The Young Girls of Rochefort" (1967, Jacques Demy; in French). ... **MUSEUM OF MODERN ART**, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Aug. 13 at 2:30 and Aug. 15 at 5: "Laws of Gravity" (1992, Nick Gomez). ... Aug. 13 at 6 and Aug. 15 at 2: "Looking for Richard" (1996, Al Pacino). ... Aug. 14 at 2:30 and Aug. 17 at 6: "It Should Happen to You" (1953, George Cukor). ... Aug. 14 at 6 and Aug. 17 at 2:30: "Born Yesterday" (1950, Cukor). ... Aug. 14 at 8 and Aug. 18 at 2:30: "The Long Day Closes" (1992, Terence Davies). ... Aug. 16 at 2: "Licence to Kill" (1989, John Glen). ... Aug. 16 at 5: "GoldenEye" (1995, Martin Campbell). ... Aug. 18 at 6: "Amateur" (1994, Hal Hartley). ... **WALTER READE THEATRE**, Lincoln Center (875-5600)—Through Aug. 20: A program of films from the Philippines. ... Aug. 13 at 6:30: "Restaurant" (1997, Eric Bross). ... Aug. 15-16 at 2: "Tarzan's New York Adventure" (†). ... **AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE**, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—A program of films directed or produced by Steven Spielberg. Aug. 15 at 2 and 7: "Empire of the Sun" (1987). ... Aug. 15 at 5: "Gremlins 2 The New Batch" (†). ... Aug. 16 at 2: "Hook" (1991). ... Aug. 16 at 5: "Always" (1989).

FLORENCE GOULD HALL, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Aug. 18 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "Pot-Bouille" (†).

BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART, Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000, ext. 230)—A program of Mexican films on which Gabriel Figueroa served as cinematographer. All films in Spanish, with English subtitles. Aug. 15 at 5: "Maria Candelaria" (1943, Emilio Fernandez).

BRYANT PARK, Sixth Ave. at 42nd St.—Mondays, starting at dusk: free drive-in-style movie-going, beginning with coming attractions. The feature on Aug. 17 will be "Stage Door" (†). (Rain date is the following night.)

A DIFFERENT LIGHT BOOKSTORE, 151 W. 19th St.—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On Aug. 16 at 7, the feature will be "Summer and Smoke" (1961, Peter Glenville).

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110)—Aug. 12 at 8: "Morocco" (1998, Frank Matter) and "4 O'Clock" (1998, Robert Flanagan). ... Aug. 13 at 7: "Haiti" (1947, Maya Deren). ... A program of films by Michelangelo Antonioni. Aug. 14 at 8 and Aug. 15 at 5:30 and 8: "Blow-Up" (1966). ... Aug. 15 at 3: "Red Desert" (1964). ... Aug. 16 at 3: "Chung Kuo China" (1972), a documentary. ... Aug. 16 at 8: "Zabriskie Point" (1969).

MUSEUM OF TELEVISION AND RADIO, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—Through Aug. 30: "Queen of the Stardust Ballroom" (1975, Sam O'Steen), with Maureen Stapleton. ... Through Sept. 24: A series of films starring the Monty Pythons.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

ANGELIKA FILM CENTER, 18 W. Houston St.
ART GREENWICH TWIN, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
ASTOR PLAZA, 44th St. at Broadway.
BECKMAN, Second Ave. at 66th St.
CHELSEA CINEMAS, 260 W. 23rd St.
CHELSEA WEST, 333 W. 23rd St.
CINEMA I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
CINEMA II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
CINEMA 3RD AVENUE, Third Ave. at 60th St.
CORONET CINEMAS, Third Ave. at 59th St.
CRITERION CENTER, Broadway at 44th St.
EAST 85TH STREET, First Ave. at 85th St.
EASTSIDE PLAYHOUSE, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84TH STREET SIXPLEX, Broadway at 84th St.
86TH STREET EAST TWIN, Third Ave. at 86th St.
EMBASSY I, 2, AND 3, Seventh Ave. at 47th St.
59TH STREET EAST CINEMA, 239 E. 59th St.
FILM FORUM, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
FIRST & 62ND CINEMAS, 400 E. 62nd St.
GOTHAM CINEMA, Third Ave. at 58th St.
GUILD, 33 W. 50th St.
LINCOLN PLAZA CINEMAS, Broadway at 63rd St.
LINCOLN SQUARE, Broadway at 68th St.
METRO CINEMA I AND 2, Broadway at 99th St.
MURRAY HILL CINEMAS, 160 E. 34th St.
NEW YORK TWIN, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19TH STREET EAST 6, Broadway at 19th St.
OLYMPIA I AND II, Broadway at 107th St.
ORPHEUM VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
PARIS, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
PARK & 86TH STREET CINEMAS, 125 E. 86th St.
QUAD CINEMA, 34 W. 13th St.
REGENCY, Broadway at 67th St.
THE SCREENING ROOM, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
62ND & BROADWAY, 62 W. 62nd St.
64TH AND 2ND, Second Ave. at 64th St.
72ND STREET EAST, Third Ave. at 71st St.
STATE, Broadway at 45th St.
SUTTON I AND 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34TH STREET SHOWPLACE, 238 E. 34th St.
VILLAGE EAST CINEMAS, Second Ave. at 12th St.
VILLAGE THEATRE VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
WAYERLY I AND 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
WORLDWIDE CINEMAS, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
ZIEGFELD, 141 W. 54th St.



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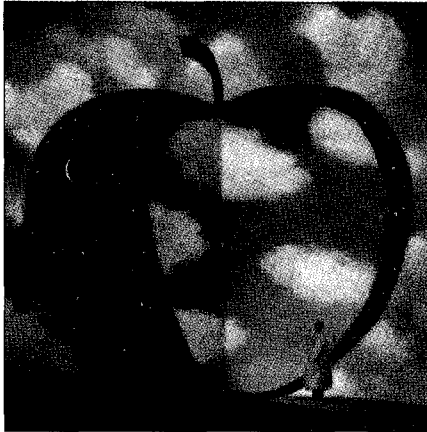
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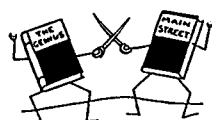
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THE TALK OF THE TOWN

INK

A Modern Library juror fesses up about the hundred best novels.



I WAS a member of the entirely white, predominantly male, and somewhat doddering Modern Library editorial board that compiled a list of the hundred best novels written in English in the twentieth century. I don't want to dodge my contribution to the list's notoriety. In fact, I want to cheerfully assent to the opinion expressed in these pages that the list is "weird." When I saw the final roster, I was a little shocked at what the ten of us had wrought, not only in respect to the list's glaring omissions (no Toni Morrison, no Patrick White, only eight women in the lot) but in respect to its generally oppressive stodginess. The voting process was partly at fault for this quality of desuetude. A luncheon meeting with a good wine that allowed for lively disputation would have soon eliminated such toothless pretenders as "The Magnificent Ambersons" and "Zuleika Dobson."

As it was, we voted by mail ballot. Each judge checked off from a roll call of several hundred novels the works he (or, in the case of A. S. Byatt, she) thought worthy of making the cut. The books were then ranked by the number of the votes tallied. Those receiving, say, nine votes (like "Ulysses" and "The Great

Gatsby") were placed at the top of the list, and the others were rated downward accordingly. Such a procedure led to some odd (or weird) results. That Aldous Huxley's "Brave New World" and Samuel Butler's "The Way of All Flesh" reached the empyrean (at Nos. 5 and 12, respectively) didn't necessarily mean they deserved such an exalted rating. It meant only that eight or nine judges just happened to believe those books belonged somewhere among the anointed hundred.

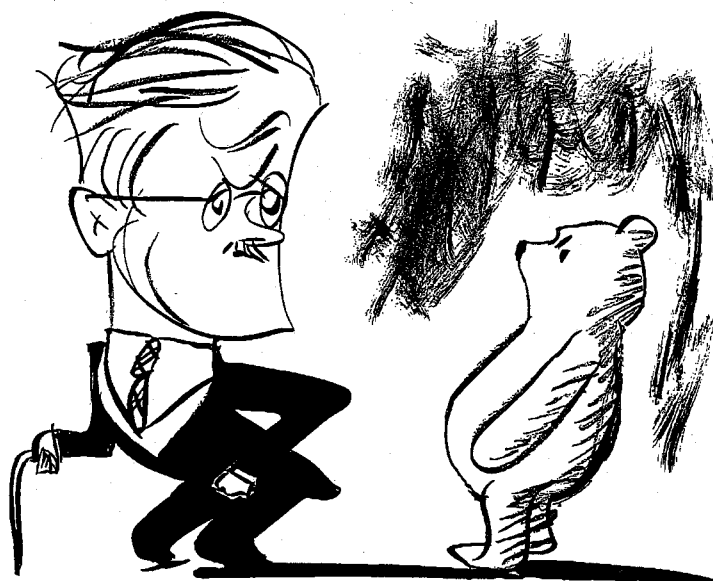
People who were legitimately exasperated by the Modern Library's inventory might take heart from a rival list drawn up by the bright members of the course in publishing at Radcliffe College, and printed in the *Boston Globe* and *USA Today*, among other papers. They would be encouraged, at least at first, by the youth of those involved (most are in their twenties) and by the fact that most are female and some nonwhite. The students' choices, while often extravagant, are in many cases a bracing corrective to the Mod-

ern Library's pervasive air of superannuation. An example: "The Catcher in the Rye," bogged down at No. 64 on our list, vaults to second place, right after "The Great Gatsby."

In a way, the Radcliffe list is as proper and predictable as the Modern Library's. It pays appropriate homage to the great modernist authors: Joyce, Faulkner, Hemingway, Woolf, Steinbeck, James, Orwell, Nabokov. Yet it also affirms the importance of certain women writers not present on the other list, notably Toni Morrison (with three titles) and Flannery O'Connor. Sometimes the importance is exaggerated: Alice Walker's "The Color Purple" at No. 5? But most of the old fogies to whom one might rightly object have been dumped: Booth Tarkington, Arnold Bennett, James T. Farrell, Thornton Wilder, and John O'Hara. These patricides seem to be worthy ones, allowing space not only for writers whose absence was conspicuous from the Modern Library list—John Updike and Don DeLillo—but

for a small yet refreshing category: children's books.

They seemed a wonderful addition. I found myself not giving a damn that "Charlotte's Web" (No. 13) and "Winnie-the-Pooh" (No. 22) were in a much loftier position than "A Passage to India" (No. 59) and "Sons and Lovers" (No. 64). But I began to be made uneasy by the realization that many significant gains were offset by inexplicable losses. Where was the matchless Graham Greene? What happened to Saul Bellow and Philip



James Joyce and Winnie-the-Pooh

Roth? Walker Percy's "The Movie-goer" was gone, as was John Cheever's "The Wapshot Chronicle"; and who should pop up in their stead but the hectoring Ayn Rand, represented by her dismal blockbusters "The Fountainhead" and "Atlas Shrugged."

Moreover, just as the Modern Library list had done, the Radcliffe list ignored virtually all experimental fiction and many widely read contemporaries—from Beckett to Pynchon, from Joan Didion to Robert Stone. Finally, there were the profoundly eccentric rankings. Is Douglas Adams's "A Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy" really better than anything written by Theodore Dreiser?

Somewhere in this is a lesson. Perhaps it's only that all lists are weird, but each list is weird in its own way.

—WILLIAM STYRON



DEPT. OF SECOND THOUGHTS

Bob Packwood is still trying to figure out why he did it.



THE night after the Senate Ethics Committee voted to expel Bob Packwood, Republican of Oregon, for sexual misconduct, the Senator got a call at home from President Clinton. "Bob, I know how hard this is for you, and 'I admire your courage,' Clinton said, in Packwood's recollection. "I just wanted to call and let you know that I was thinking of you."

Now that the President is facing a similar ordeal, Packwood is feeling a strong sense of identification. He said the other day that when he first saw Kathleen Willey on television, with her pearls and frosted hair, she reminded him of the lobbyists and volunteers who had accused him. Reflecting on the disparity between Clinton's and Willey's accounts, Packwood added, "I think they were both right. She may have accurately described what happened. And the President may have thought, I didn't do anything wrong. Both of them would tell their version of it and be telling the truth. Both of them could take a lie-detector test and both of them would pass." As for whether

Monica Lewinsky had a sexual relationship with the President, Packwood said, "My bones tell me she did not."

It's been three years since Packwood was forced from the Senate, and in the public mind he has come to represent the archetypal sexual predator. Not long ago, he wrote me a note inviting me to interview him in Washington. Packwood is a rarity among men in public life accused of sexual misconduct: he is willing to talk about what those incidents meant to him at the time, and about why he was willing to risk his career to satisfy some fleeting, and not so fleeting, sexual impulses.

Today, at age sixty-five, Packwood feels the furor over sexual harassment fading. He is making more than eight hundred thousand dollars a year in his one-man lobbying firm, optimistically named Sunrise Research. He has been sober for nearly six years, though as you watch him knock back one nonalcoholic beer after another you can see the shadow of his drinking problem. His interactions with women seem to have some of the same quality of hedonism in check. He flirts, he infuses conversation with a sexual charge, he "kind of floats out an invitation," as a former secretary claims he did with her at first, but then he stops. When he meets a woman he likes at a dinner party

now, he said, "I would be less likely to kiss her. The most I would do is a kiss on the cheek."

The Ethics Committee examined charges against Packwood—ranging from groping and kissing to chasing a woman around a table—from seventeen women. At the time of the hearings, he said, he kept searching through his mind: "Had I done those things? Why had I done them?" He now says that when he looks back at the episodes, many of which he was too drunk to remember, "I am offended at myself."

Packwood explained, "I didn't think of myself as having a problem with women." He had watched the Clarence Thomas spectacle without a ripple of recognition, he said, adding, "Probably every member of Congress could say, 'I've never done anything like that. I never said anything about pubic hair.'"

Reminded of some of the charges in his own case, he responded sadly, "That just doesn't sound like me." He said it was a kind of out-of-body experience for him to read what some of these women said he had done: "I don't remember all of the women I've made love to. How can I remember all of the women I've kissed?"

Packwood has a knack for creating instant relationships. He is a politician who wants to hug and kiss and

shake hands, but who also wants the real intimacy that those gestures are meant to refer to. He was raised on Hollywood movies, taking a dime every Saturday afternoon to the cinema down the street to watch Cary Grant and Clark Gable, and there is a touch of Hollywood in his sexual misadventures. Sitting in his office, Packwood described a scene from "Picnic," one that comes up in his diaries and seems to be an important part of his romantic lexicon. Humming the movie's theme song, Packwood explained how the handsome outsider, played by William Holden, starts clapping in time to the music, and then Kim Novak drifts by clapping in response, and then, without speaking, they come together and start dancing, lips inches apart. As Packwood clapped slowly to show how the perfect moment worked, it was suddenly clear how he had misjudged so many situations with women: he saw a potential romantic situation and got swept up in the perfection of an idealized scene, dreamily disconnected from life.

Packwood, who divorced his wife, Georgie, in 1990, doesn't believe there was anything wrong with his adulterous affairs: "I thought and still think that two adults are free to do what they want in terms of consensual sexual relations." Asked if he felt guilty kissing his child's babysitter, who later became one of the complainants, while his wife was outside in the car, he said, "I just didn't think about it."

Packwood's affairs with staff members were never part of the official investigation, but they were part of what turned public opinion against him. The most publicized of these was described in a diary entry that the Ethics Committee released to the press. After a party, he danced with a young staff member, had sex with

her on the rug of his office, and lay naked with her talking for an hour and half afterward. "For the life of me," Packwood said quietly, "I can't figure out why people thought that was a sordid story. It is kind of a tender moment." He said that he and this "sexy thing" had a passionate intellectual bond. As he wrote in his diary, "What I want to do is not to bed them, but excite them, take them to an intellectual Shangri-La."

One recent evening, Packwood settled down in his apartment, a duplex in upper Georgetown, to watch his favorite movie of all time, "Breaker Morant." His house has the impersonal look of a hotel room, with a plaid couch, oil paintings of forests and ships, and bookcases filled with leather-bound novels. But the garden is pure Packwood. It has a giant hot tub surrounded by yellow and purple wildflowers that he planted himself.

He said he wanted to create an English country garden.

Inside, Packwood turned off the lights and slipped in the video. Curled up on a green recliner, the lights of the movie playing across his face, he looked older, and tired. He was concentrating on the Boer War and the Australians who are given an unfair trial and are convicted and sentenced to death.

"Wasn't that great!" he exclaimed in the middle of the movie as he rewound the scene where Lord Kitchener says that it is worth sacrificing three Australians to end the war, and another British officer answers dryly, "I doubt the Australians share our enthusiasm." The defendants did murder the men they were accused of murdering. But it was wartime, and they acted out of extremes of fear and rage. The movie's point—and its profundity—is that they are both guilty and not guilty. And, as we watched the two soldiers being led away to the firing squad,

and the sound of the shots filled the room, Packwood took out a blue handkerchief and patted the tears on his face.

—KATIE ROIPHE

TO MARKET, TO MARKET

A curious synchronicity between stock exchange and stockyard.



FROM the Upper East Side last week came evidence

that a bull market is also a cow market. At The Kiosk, a restaurant on Lexington Avenue in the Seventies which feeds by night the hungry locals who commute down to Wall Street by day, orders for steak dropped dramatically after Tuesday's stock-market plunge, while fish was way up.

"Sales of fish were three to one over steak on Tuesday night," Eamon Roche, who owns the restaurant with his partner, Nell Campbell, said. "In the previous week, the ratio had been one to one." Roche began noticing a precise correlation between market and meat about a year ago: "The staff would say, 'Guess the market is doing well,' because we had sold all the filet or all the marinated flank steak or steak au poivre, and then they would find that, yes, it had been doing well that day." Daily specials are the most sensitive calibration instruments, Roche explained—last Tuesday night, skate versus hanger steak—and the swing is discernible only between red meat and fish. Sales of roast chicken or of the restaurant's vegetable Napoleon are consistent, no matter the movements of the Dow.

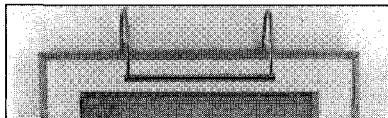
Like the oft-noted hemline index (when the market goes down, so do skirt lengths), the steak index serves no useful purpose: Roche has not found a way to read the markets of tomorrow from the kitchen tallies of today and thereby rearrange his investment portfolio. "We are not going to get rich with this," he admitted. "We are going to lag the market by a day with this indicator, which isn't great. We might want to work on desserts. Maybe they predict what will happen next."

—REBECCA MEAD



Bob
Packwood

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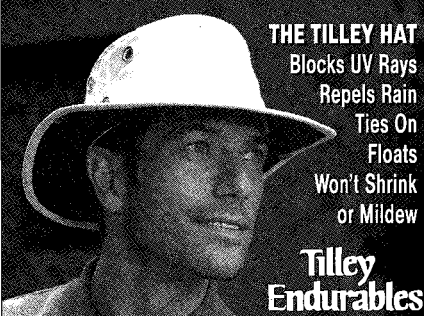
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THE SPORTING SCENE

FRONT RUNNING

In a season like this, talking Yankee baseball is almost as good as watching the team play ball.

BY ROGER ANGELL

GOOD news has been in such short supply for baseball fans in recent years that this summer feels like winning the Powerball lottery: you wake up each morning thinking, *Can it be?* Mark McGwire, the Cardinals' pink-whiskered, armoire-armed slugger, has nudged "Titanic" aside on the national large-object-recognition screen, having unleashed forty-five home runs and a thousand "Big Mac" variations in the headlines and on the Busch Stadium upper-deck fan banners ("Hit It McHere!"), and having caused fans in other parks to boo their own pitchers whenever they get him out or sensibly hand him a base on balls. Sometime next month, despite a recent, almost inevitable slump, he will likely launch the round-tripper that does away with Roger Maris's de-asterisked, thirty-seven-year-old record of sixty-one and simultaneously release several dozen attendant television crews and a hundred-odd baseball scribes from their dopey vigil and send them back to their families. If McGwire doesn't get it done, then the resurgent Cub right fielder, Sammy Sosa, will do the job—or else Junior Griffey, the Mariners' engaging *torquiste*, or perhaps the Padres' Greg Vaughn. I don't know: maybe they'll all get there. Muscle-building and the thinning out of pitching talent with the league expansions have clearly set the stage, and even though the attack on a famous record isn't exactly what baseball is about, it's fun every day (well, almost) and it's what America wants. Make it McSoon, guys.

Even with the shortage of pennant races—except for two-team engagements in the National League Central and American League West (or American League Worst) divisions—baseball happiness has been general, and the embittered fan feelings directed toward the players in the wake of their 1994 strike and the cancellation of the World Series that fall appear to have dispersed.

I cannot vouch for any brave smiles among followers of the World Champion Florida Marlins, a franchise that has been stripped bare like an abandoned Lexus, or among rooters for the disappointing Seattle Mariners, but high attendance figures elsewhere suggest that fans are making do nicely with what's at hand, which often means pitchers: in Boston, say, where the newly arrived right-hander Pedro Martinez has gone 15-3 for a spirited second-place club running a full fifteen games behind the Yankees; at Wrigley Field, where the Cubs' twenty-one-year-old rookie flinger Kerry Wood electrified the bleacherites by striking out twenty Houston Astros, tying the major-league record set by Roger Clemens; and even in Detroit, where the Tigers have the youngest but far from the dullest pitching in the league (up at Yankee Stadium the other day they ran out a twenty-one-year-old rookie, Matt Anderson, in both ends of a doubleheader, and he threw repeatedly in the 97-98 m.p.h. range and once or twice in three digits). Montreal is going no place, as usual, but its Venezuelan reliever, Ugueth Urbina, has the weirdest new baseball name and twenty-four saves.

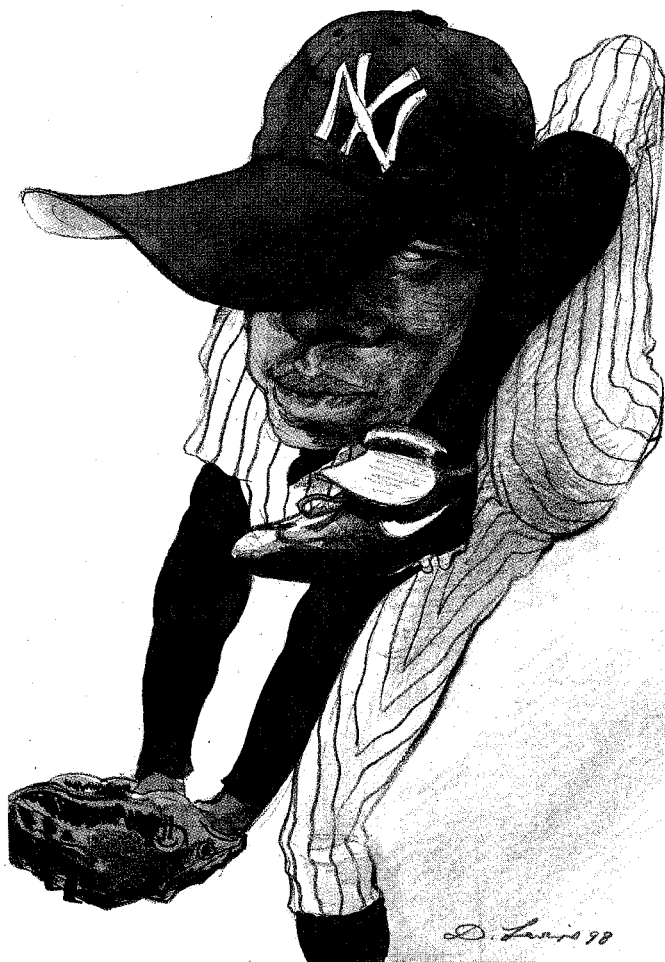
The Yankees' performance—they are fifty games above the .500 level—has been so smooth and consistent that it has produced less than the expected number of late explosions and game highlights. There was, to be sure, David Wells's perfect game against the Twins, on a Sunday in May, which ended with the Boomer leaping and cavorting off the Stadium mound like a tarpon; and, two days later, Bernie Williams's devastating three-run homer, down in Baltimore, and the wild brawl that followed Armando Benitez's retaliatory drilling of Tino Martinez. But these are the exceptions. What comes most often to my mind about these Yankees is an exuberant freedom afield—Derek Jeter, just the

other day, ranging far to his left to snaffle an Albert Belle grounder, spinning at full stride, and throwing him out at first by a whisker. Yes, this is what short-stops *do*, but not often in a single flowing motion that produces an explosive "Oh!" from the packed right side of the stadium. Or I see Chad Curtis, out in Cleveland, scoring from first base after a double into the right-field corner, with his skidding slide across the back edge of the plate barely beating an elegant, near-perfect relay. All that horizontal action, replayed three times on my television screen—base runner and fielders and the low, streaking ball—felt like a diorama of classic ball.

The Yankee pitching has been stifling, especially among the starters, and leads the league in earned-run average, complete games, saves, and fewest hits and runs and home runs allowed. At the plate, the Yankees are second in runs batted in, first in bases on balls and on-base percentage—and sixth in home runs. They have eight players with more than ten homers, but only one with as many as twenty. In this era of the tape-measured four-hundred-and-fifty-foot home-run blast, the Bronx Bombers have gone cerebral. They play the slowest games in the majors, over three hours, on average—almost a pictorial stat, illustrating the grave attention that their batters, top to bottom, give to the pitch and the situation, and to the fate of the base runner. In a late catchphrase, they are patient in the strike zone. Like everyone else, I relish the home run (what's not to like about Straw's second dinger of the day against the White Sox on a recent Saturday: a low, *preoccupied* day-tripper into the black sector out in dead center), but I also want to keep hold of the satisfied look on Paul O'Neill's oft-troubled face when he came back into the dugout at Tiger Stadium one evening after his

little four-part journey: single, stolen base, third on an infield out, home on a fly ball. Everyone got up to bump fists with him.

EXCEPT for a left-field seat at Busch Stadium, with Mark McGwire up at bat, the best place to taste the flavor of this baseball midseason might be Yankee manager Joe Torre's clubhouse office, up



Yankee pitchers (including the Cuban right-hander Orlando Hernandez) have been stifling, leading the league in six categories.

at the Stadium, about four hours before game time. His club has been riding high, as we know, playing at a pace that matches the best performance in this century. Going back just a bit, though, to a particular late-July morning, the Yanks were pooped. Two nights earlier, they had lost to the Tigers, 4-3, in a monster seventeen-inning standoff that ran just under six hours; then, since this was a doubleheader, they played again, reversing the score, and concluding the day's action at 1:17 A.M. Back again the following night, still against Detroit, they won in a lightning-fast (or so it seemed) two hours and forty minutes,

behind David Cone, who set down the Tigers 5-1, with ten strikeouts, running his record for the season to fourteen wins and three losses. Today's game, which will conclude the Tigers' visit, is an afternoon affair, and batting practice has been cancelled for the second day in a row—a merciful decision, in any case, because the morning is a blazer, and the racks of empty stands outside are throwing off a fierce Saharan dazzle. In here, coolness (in both senses) and quiet prevail. Everyone's running a little late today—the clubhouse boys are distributing freshly pressed uniforms—but, hey, it's a long season, so come on in and take a seat.

Joe Torre's office is a capacious, top-of-the-line example of the black-Naughahyde-cum-blown-up-sports-mural managerial special, but this is Yankee country, and the major artwork, which is of Velázquez proportions, shows Torre leaning over home plate at the Stadium to shake the hand of Atlanta manager Bobby Cox, before the opening game of the 1996 World Series. Torre's desk—he's not here yet—is outsize as well (there's an impressive batch of Sinatra CDs on a shelf behind it), and over in one corner of the room there's space for a circular conference table, set about with folding chairs that bear the Yankee logo. Rick Cerrone, the dapper Yankee media-relations director, is here, murmuringly fielding phone calls, while Frank Dolson, a retired Philadelphia *Inquirer* columnist, sits comfortably opposite him, holding a paper cup of coffee. No sign of George Steinbrenner; no George Costanza; no shade of Billy Martin.

"What I liked," Dolson says at last, "is the way they played in that seventeen-inning thing. All those great defensive plays, even though the game meant zilch. Curtis with that over-his-head catch. And last night they were still up-

set about the loss, a whole day later. Total pros."

Adam Davidoff, a young intern, sticks his head in the door.

"They here yet?" Cerrone asks.

"They're here," Davidoff says.

"Are they—uh, quiet?"

"They're great—they're eating it up."

He's talking not about the Yankees, it turns out, but about a visiting group of schoolchildren from P.S. 176 in the Bronx, who are visiting the Stadium today.

"They're not out in the sun, are they?" Cerrone wants to know, and when Davidoff reassures him, Davidoff is sent on his way. "Give them some history," Cerrone says.

"I already did," Davidoff says.

"Then give them some more," Cerrone calls after him. He goes back to the phones.

Joe Torre has come in during all this. He's wearing dark jeans and a polo shirt, and he has a big bundle of newspapers under his arm. He nods to his visitors and checks his phone calls. In no time, there are more people in the room: a clubhouse boy, with fresh coffee; Peter Gammons, the Boston *Globe* columnist and ESPN sage, in a blazer and striped shirt; and Don Zimmer, the short, pop-eyed bench coach who sits in the dugout as consigliere, just to Torre's right, during every Yankee game. Pink and freshly shaved, he is already in uniform, but his belt and the top button of his pants are comfortably open; when he plops down in one corner of the big couch he looks like a kid waiting for a party. This is the ritual pre-game levee, with the same shifting cast—writers, coaches, a trainer, an early player with a question about tickets—that goes on in every clubhouse in the sport, but here at the Stadium in this part of the year the talk and the laughter have a slower, deeper tone. A little resonance. It's not first place that does this, or the twenty-three World Championships, but these are somewhere within or just under the conversation as well. This is not Sheboygan.

The immediate subject at hand is a riveting late moment from Atlanta, last night, where Braves manager Bobby Cox pulled his talented but lackadaisical starting center fielder, Andruw Jones, in the middle of a game after Jones loafed on a flyball, having earlier run through a clear stop sign at third base and into an

DISTINCTIONS

It is hard to love the pessimist
holding forth from his dank ditch
searching for woes as for Easter eggs
like Proust's butler.

It is hard to love the optimist
putting his jolly mask on grief,
predicting joys which never come
but will be said to have done so.

It is easy to love the feckless
who takes the days' jerky ride
without the help of theory,
constantly thrown by chance,

surprised by joy, surprised by woe.
A constant wonderer who never
triumphed in foresight—
innocently astonished.

—JOSEPHINE JACOBSEN

out. No one in the room blames Bobby, not for a minute. "How can you *reach* a player like that?" Zimmer says. He looks shocked.

Another bad-form case comes up—a Red Sox outfielder who styled his way around the bases the other day after knocking a home run against the Indians' Bartolo Colon.

"We don't have a rule about that," Torre says, in his dark baritone, "but this game is so humbling that you don't want to make a big to-do when you have to play every single day. I never like to see linebackers going crazy after they've sacked the quarterback, when they're losing by forty points."

"What's this guy got, anyway—thirteen lifetime homers?" Zimm asks disgustedly.

But then there is a sudden shift to the mid-eighties, and Jeffrey Leonard's home-run trot—a hilarious bird-with-a-broken-wing pantomime with which Leonard, a dangerous outfielder with the Giants, used to taunt a pitcher he had just taken deep—and the room brightens at the thought. "He had that great start in 1987, and it wound up a big thing," Zimmer says, laughing. "Well, he was a hell of a player for two months."

The river of baseball takes another twist, and we are back at last night's

game, and the vision of David Cone, scarlet with exertion, coming off the field after his ten strikeouts and eight dominating innings. "He has the best command we've seen in three years," Torre says.

Mention of Cone brings up a new statistic that appeared on the TV monitors the night before: his string of eighty-six consecutive starts without losing two in a row. It seems that he stands eighth in baseball history in this regard. The leader in this just discovered category, at a hundred games, is a Washington Senators warhorse of the nineteen-twenties, Firpo Marberry, and some of us now repeat the grand old name—"Firpo Marberry... Fir-po Mar-berry!"—like cigar connoisseurs sniffing a famous panetela as it goes around the room.

Inevitably, we come to this Yankee team's great rush of wins and its chances of finishing the regular season at an unheard-of level of success. "I make it a habit not to read the sports pages," Torre says. "I mean, it's nice to be talked about, but with us it's always 'so far.' To a man, these guys know this is always a one-game situation."

Gammons says that he's heard the Yankees being compared with the great mid-seventies Cincinnati Reds club, the Bench-Rose-Morgan "Big Red Ma-

chine," and Torre closes his eyes and holds up a hand at the thought. "Even though our pitching is better than theirs was," he murmurs. He moves along to a different model—the 1968 league-champion Cardinals. "They didn't score a whole lot of runs, but they had that inner conceit. I think we have some of that. It isn't important to tell somebody how good they are as long as they know it themselves."

Torre has been climbing into his uniform—it's almost time for his daily pre-game press briefing, out in the dugout—but, before we break up, the talk eases around again to 1978 and the epochal Yankees-Red Sox struggles of that summer, which came down to a tie at the end of the regular season, with each brilliant, battle-worn club standing at ninety-nine wins and needing to win the one-game playoff, in Boston, to enter the post-season. How did we get here? Well, there'd been mention of Dennis Eckersley, the dauntless reliever, who'd come back to the Red Sox this year for his twenty-fourth and probably his farewell season (he is forty-three) but had lately been languishing, though without a murmur of complaint, on a rehabilitation assignment down in Pawtucket. Thinking about the Eck took us to the celebrated ninth-inning homer he gave up to the Dodgers' gimpy, practically wheelchaired Kirk Gibson in the ninth inning of the first game of the 1988 World Series, at Dodger Stadium, not to mention the score and the count and the situation, and the nature of the pitch (well, it was a back-door slider), and what Gibson, for his part, had had in mind (actually, he'd been trying to hit a single). And this line of everyday baseball think-back brought us, of course, to the Bucky Dent shocker in the 1978 playoff—his unexpected little home run into the left-field screen, hit in the seventh inning against Mike Torrez, which put down the Sox (and plunged all New England into the soup, or chowder, once again) and sent the Yankees along toward their eventual World Championship.

It's been twenty years since that extraordinary moment, but no one in Torre's office is quite ready to give up the subject, least of all Zimmer, who was the Boston manager then. "To have it won two or three times,

and then lose it," he says at one point, but the thought can't be finished.

"I was living in the South End," Gammons says, "and when I walked over to Fenway about seven-thirty on the morning of the game, my legs were shaking from the tension. The whole city was that way."

"That shot in the sixth inning that Freddy Lynn hit off Guidry," Zimmer says, "and then Piniella pulls it in in the corner. *Nobody* plays over there against Guidry. I'm in the dugout, and when the ball goes out I think, That's two more runs. No—he's caught it."

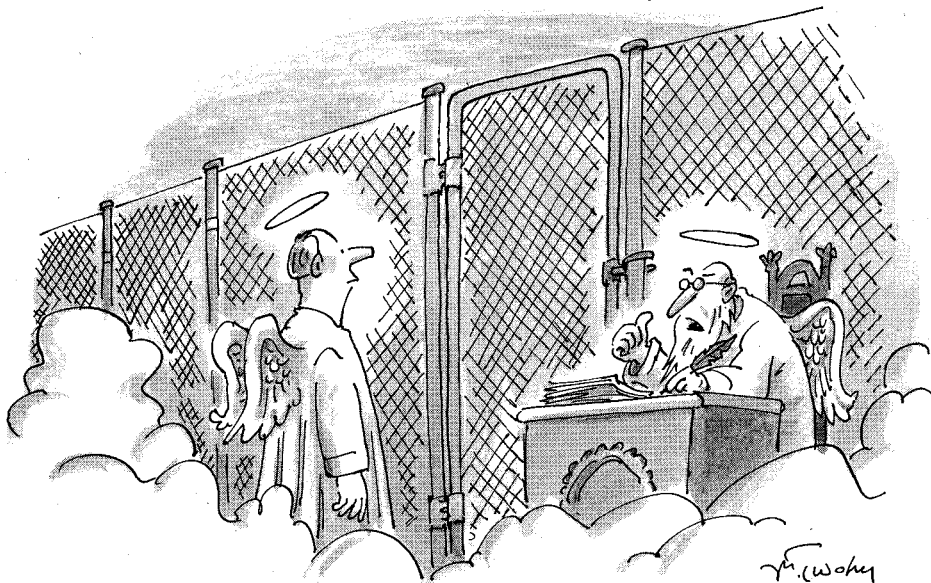
It comes to me that all of us in the room are back at Fenway once again not just because of the anniversary or because of Zimm but because we understand that competition of this sort—an unplanned great game between famous teams at the end of a full summer of bitter rivalry and grudging play—is beyond the capacity of today's sport. Our conversation ends, in any case, when Torre finishes tying his shoes and stands up. "Well, yesterday was my anniversary," he announces. "Twenty-three years since I hit into four double plays in one game."

THREE days later, on a Saturday morning, the Yankees' clubhouse was full of strange faces. Well, not wholly strange: Ron Guidry, Hank Bauer, Goose Gossage, Graig Nettles, and many more. It was Old Timers' Day again, and I had a glimpse of Joe Pepitone—in full pinstripes, spikes, and cap—regarding himself carefully in

the bathroom mirror. Most of the old Yanks, I found, didn't seem to know much about the current Yankees, but Whitey Ford was right up to date. He will turn seventy-two this fall, but his grin and bright eyes have kept their sparkle. "This Dukey," he said—El Duque, that is: Orlando Hernandez, the Yanks' vibrant new Cuban right-hander—"gives you all that motion out there when he's winding up, but his arm comes through in just the right places in the end."

I had a word with Jim Bouton, the fireballer-author, who had been invited back for the first time after the Yankees decided at last to forgive him for writing "Ball Four," that lively, once notorious 1970 best-seller about his teammates' drinking and babe-watching habits on the road. Bouton, who is fifty-nine, only stopped playing last year, when he noticed that opposing batters in the semi-pro Twilight League, in Albany (he played for the Momma's Pizza nine), were knocking his best pitches over the wall and then they'd bring the ball back to him for an autograph. He told me he'd signed one with "Congratulations on your homer—Jim Bouton. (Aluminum bat.)"

Joe Torre didn't participate in the ceremonies—"I was never a Yankee," he said, which struck me as odd—but, at fifty-eight, he is the significant Old Timer for this particular team. His extraordinary calm in all weathers and his eighteen years with the Braves and Cardinals as a slugger (and his M.V.P. title, in 1971) are the right manager's cre-



"The old pearly gates looked nice, but they were hell to maintain."

dentials for this roster of experienced, wealthy, and sophisticated Yankee athletes. That little mention of his about the four double-play at-bats is known to every current Yankee batter, I'm sure. Just recently, he told the writers one morning that he thought he might have been useful to Tino Martinez, who had been struggling to match his forty-four homers last year. "I think he's more like a natural twenty-five-homer man," Torre said. "Sure, he wants to live up to last year, but you can't *do* that. I found that out in 1972. I'd led the league in batting the year before, but suddenly I couldn't do anything right. You start thinking about your feet and your hands. You can't let yourself think that way."

I asked Paul O'Neill if he'd ever seen Torre lose his temper with one of his players—really lose it, I meant—and he said, "Not that I remember. What he does do if you've really messed up is give you that glare—you can't miss it. Just like a dad."

MUCH of the sentiment of Old Timers' Day is contrived, of course, and what you notice when the present-day young players begin to filter in to the clubhouse is the enormous distance that separates them from the geezers. "It's hard to believe it's ever going to happen to you," O'Neill murmured after Cliff Johnson stopped by to shake his hand. ("Still sweet swingin', I see," Heathcliff had said.) But then there are exceptions. When El Duque Hernandez came out of the trainers' room, he told a few of us writers that he could hardly wait to see his fellow-countryman Luis Tiant again. Everything about Hernandez is exceptional, come to think of it—starting with his departure from Cuba last December, when, seeking political asylum and pitching megabucks, he fled in a small boat and nearly perished at sea. He is the older brother of Livan Hernandez, who won the Most Valuable Player award in the World Series last fall, while pitching for the Florida Marlins. El Duque was signed by the Yankees in March and came up to the big club in June, where he almost immediately took his place in the starting rotation—a tall, free-armed, amazingly long-legged righty, with no end of stuff and an up-by-his-chin leg-cricket. Out on the mound, he was pure pleasure. His curved cap bill and wide-

breaking semi-sidearm curveball had a high-school look, but there was nothing halfway about his intensity or his shifting angles, which give right-handed batters such trouble. On one of his early starts, he seemed puzzled when Torre came out to the mound, late in the game, to call in a reliever. "I had to pry the ball out of his glove," Joe said. Afterward, probably kidding, Hernandez said, "In Cuba, you finish games or *die*."

When El Duque—with his shaved head, sticking-out ears, and Buddha-like expression—went over to his locker on Old Timers' Day, everybody's gaze fell upon him and stuck. Tiant, the old Boston and Yankee whirlbird, was still out on the field with the photographers, but the two had met this spring down in Tampa, where Hernandez had just joined the club. "I remember the moment," he said now, through his interpreter, Leo Astacio. "One of the great players of all time, and the greatest Cuban player of all." The two had hugged lengthily.

Asked about his feelings then, El Duque said, "Would it be more emotional for you to hug the Pope?"

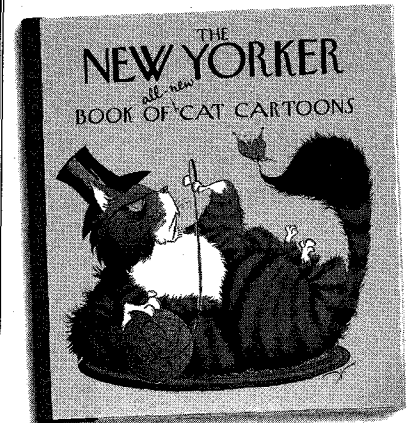
Someone pointed out that they might have looked odd, hugging, since Tiant is midsize and now distinctly tubby, while El Duque is a gazellelike six-two. Hernandez took this in friendly fashion but didn't agree. "Size isn't measured up to the top of your head," he said, "but from the top of your head up to the sky."

Now and then, a writer senses the right moment to put away his notebook, but on my way out, after I'd thanked El Duque and shaken his hand (no interpreter necessary), I happened to walk by John Blanchard and Homer Bush, who were also shaking hands. Blanchard, a power-hitting catcher-outfielder with the Yanks in the early sixties, has put on some pounds around his middle and has also encountered serious problems with his health—cancer, open-heart surgery, and, just lately, a knee replacement. Homer Bush is the kid brother on the 1998 Yankees—a skinny, dashing pinch-hitter and infielder, with a limitless future. He is twenty-five but looks about eighteen.

"Homer," Blanchard said earnestly, holding Bush's hand in both paws, "some day you're going to be old, too."

Homer's mouth fell open at the news. He laughed uproariously. "Oh, *man!*" he said. He couldn't stop laughing. ♦

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PRICKING THE BUBBLE

Last week's stock-market shudder came as welcome news to Alan Greenspan, but the Fed chairman is still struggling to avoid another 1929.

BY JOHN CASSIDY

THREE weeks ago, Alan Greenspan, the chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, appeared before Congress to deliver his semi-annual report on the state of the economy. Such are the intricacies of Greenspan's circumlocutions that it is often impossible to figure out what the Fed chairman really thinks, and that is precisely his intention. On this occasion, however, he was much more straightforward than usual. He cautioned that, in order to head off a revival of inflation, interest rates might have to be raised, and he issued a thinly veiled warning to investors: "History tells us that there will be a correction of some significant dimension. What it doesn't help you on very much is when."

Since then, the Dow Jones Industrial Average has fallen by about seven hundred points. The two-hundred-and-ninety-nine-point drop on Tuesday, August 4th, made the front pages, but the index had been falling steadily, if less dramatically, since mid-July. Greenspan would never admit publicly to attempting to talk the stock market down, but the recent events were neither surprising nor unwelcome to the Fed chairman. For the past couple of years, he has been struggling to contain an unsustainable boom in the economy, caused, in large part, by the stock market's remarkable rise. This boom has placed Greenspan in an acute dilemma. Should he, as some knowledgeable observers have suggested, raise interest rates to deflate the stock-market

bubble before it gets out of hand? Or should he stand pat, despite his feeling that the optimism on Wall Street is difficult to reconcile with economic reality? So far, he has chosen the latter course, keeping interest rates virtually constant for more than two and a half years—only to watch the Dow climb from 5,117, at the beginning of 1996, to 9,337, on July 17, 1998.

In retrospect, it is clear that the Fed's inaction has contributed to the mood of euphoria among investors. Last week's correction could make Greenspan's job easier, provided the financial markets stabilize and the economy slows down to a more sustainable pace of growth. After eleven years on the job, the Fed chairman is almost universally lauded for his stewardship of the American economy, and that praise is not un-

deserved. Should the current expansion endure through November, it will become the longest ever seen in peacetime. But, despite his record, Greenspan's reputation is by no means guaranteed. The Fed was held in equally high esteem during the nineteen-twenties—another boom period, of course—only to be excoriated in subsequent decades for failing to bring Wall Street to its senses earlier. If the recent shudders in the markets prove to be the precursor to a major collapse or a deep recession, Greenspan may suffer the fate of one of his least fortunate predecessors, Roy A. Young, who was the Fed chief in October of 1929.

ON February 5th of that year, Young received a visit from his colleague George Harrison, the head of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. Harrison, a Wall Street veteran, said that "sharp, incisive action" was needed to end the alarming credit-fed speculation that had caused the Dow to double in value during the previous two years. He asked Young to immediately raise from five per cent to six per cent the interest rate at which the Fed lends money to commercial banks—a move that would reduce speculation by raising the cost of

borrowing money. Once some air had been let out of the stock market, Harrison said, the Fed could bring interest rates back down and revive the economy. Young feared that raising interest rates might actually spark a stock-market crash rather than prevent one. He turned down Harrison's request and didn't raise the discount rate until August. By then, it was too late, for the market, in John Kenneth Galbraith's words, had already "sailed off into the wild blue yonder." Two months later, on Thursday, October 24th, the Great Crash began, and in the ensuing two and a half years the mighty Dow Jones Industrial Average lost eighty-five per cent of its value.

Nobody who has money



Greenspan has presided over one of the longest peacetime expansions, but his recent policies may have encouraged a false sense of euphoria.

in the stock market likes to hear comparisons between today and 1929, but the parallels are striking. In the early months of that ill-fated year, economic growth was stalling, inflation was virtually nonexistent, the international situation was uncertain, and economists inside and outside the Fed were warning Young that Wall Street had departed from the bounds of reasonable calculation. On the day Harrison met with Young, the Dow was perched at 306, up from 202 at the end of 1927. In the second quarter of 1998, the annualized rate of economic growth fell from 5.5 per cent to 1.4 per cent, and the twelve-month inflation rate came in at just 1.7 per cent. During the same period, the turmoil in Asia spread to Japan, and the Dow hovered around 9,000. The average ratio of stock prices to corporate earnings for companies in the Standard & Poor's 500 Index, which includes most of the largest firms in the country, touched 30, the highest level seen in this century—higher, even, than the level reached in September of 1929.

"I think there is a good deal of comparison between the market in 1929 and the market today," the Nobel economist and monetary historian Milton Friedman told me. "I think both of them are bubbles. Whether the magnitudes are the same I don't have any idea. If anything, I suspect there is more of a bubble in today's market than there was in 1929."

Friedman's views are widely shared by economists. His longtime adversary Paul Samuelson, who has also been to Stockholm, said from his office at M.I.T., "I define a bubble as a situation in which the level of stock prices is high, and the rate of growth of stock prices is high, because of a self-fulfilling prophecy in which people believe the market is going to go up. On that basis, I think there has been an element of bubble in the market for at least two years, possibly longer." Friedman and Samuelson both believe that the Fed should have raised interest rates some time ago. Friedman, a monetarist, points to the recent rapid growth in the money supply as an indicator that the economy is on an unsustainable path. Samuelson, a Keynesian, relies on a more straightforward argument. "By not tightening during the last two years, Greenspan has painted himself into a corner," Samuelson said. "He is now dealing with the physics of avalanches."

Greenspan is mindful of the historical precedents. A few weeks ago, he invited a small group of outside economists to a lunch and a three-hour meeting in the Fed boardroom at its headquarters, at 20th and C Street, in Washington, D.C. The parallels with 1929 and with the recent stock-market collapse in Japan were openly discussed. "Greenspan is very worried about a repeat of Tokyo in the eighties, and he should be worried," Jeremy Siegel, a

Wharton professor who attended the session, told me. Siegel is one of only a few economists who don't believe that the stock market has been running on thin air, but even he has doubts. "There's no question that six years into an economic cycle we have never been so highly valued in our history," he said.

Economics isn't a natural science; there are few physical constants governing human behavior. Nonetheless, stock prices do exhibit some regularities over the decades—a property that statisticians call "mean reversion"—and on the basis of these regularities some tentative calculations can be made. Last winter, John Campbell, of Harvard, and Robert Shiller, of Yale, published a paper in which they figured out what would happen if the dividend yield (the average ratio of dividend payouts to stock prices) and the price-earnings ratio reverted to their historic averages over the next ten years. Their conclusions: in the first case, the stock market would fall by thirty-eight per cent in real terms; in the second case, it would fall by forty per cent. Even after the recent slide, these numbers could imply a further slide of three thousand points in the Dow.

STUDIES of this kind are only illustrative, of course. They're predicated on the unfashionable notion that nothing has really changed in the stock market during the last few years, and that old methods of valuing stocks still have merit. This quaint conceit was also out of vogue during the twenties, and that was one of the problems Roy Young and his colleagues faced as they struggled to control the stock-market boom. In 1925, an American financial analyst named Edgar Lawrence Smith published "Common Stocks as Long-Term Investments," a book that was hailed by, among others, John Maynard Keynes and Irving Fisher. (Fisher was the unfortunate Yale economist who, on October 14, 1929, announced that "stock prices have reached what looks like a permanently high plateau.") Until Smith's work appeared, stocks had been widely regarded as roguish creatures that shot up during business upswings and plummeted in recessions, rendering them unfit



"And so, due to the appearance of wrongdoing, I've decided to simulate my resignation."

for the portfolios of responsible citizens. Smith questioned this characterization. After examining financial records going all the way back to the Civil War, he concluded that during periods of inflation and deflation alike stocks consistently provided higher returns than did bonds. "We have found that there is a force at work in our common stock holdings which tends ever toward increasing their principal value," Smith wrote.

Over the following four years, other analysts and brokerage firms popularized this thesis, which was known as the Common Stock Theory of Investment. It became accepted wisdom that stocks could not go down for long, and that dips in the market, even sizable ones, were nothing to worry about: on the contrary, they were buying opportunities. "As people in the summer of 1929 looked back for precedents, they were comforted by the recollection that every crash of the past few years had been followed by a recovery, and that every recovery ultimately brought prices to a new high point," Frederick Lewis Allen recalled in "Only Yesterday," his entertaining history of the twenties. "And there was really no reason to sell at all: you were bound to win in the end if your stock was sound."

After Black Thursday, Smith's theory suffered something of an eclipse. Jeremy Siegel, the Wharton professor, resurrected it in 1994, in a book entitled, with deliberate echoes of the past, "Stocks for the Long Run." Siegel's research went back even farther than Smith's—to 1802. Since that date, he calculated, stocks have yielded, on average and after adjusting for inflation, an annual return of 7 per cent. This return is double the average yield from government bonds over the same period. Furthermore, the results of investing in stocks have been remarkably consistent: between 1802 and 1870, the average real return was 7 per cent exactly; between 1871 and 1925, it was 6.6 per cent; and between 1926 and 1997 it was 7.2 per cent. On the basis of these figures, Siegel reached an unequivocal conclusion: "There is no compelling reason for long-term investors to significantly reduce their stockholdings, no matter how high the market seems."

Like its Gatsby-era predecessor, "Stocks for the Long Run" received a rapturous reception from investment

firms, and the belief that stocks are the best of all possible investments is now almost universally accepted. "I'm a reincarnated Edgar Lawrence Smith," Siegel himself told me, with a squeal of laughter. "But I don't mind being that, because I think he was proved right in the long run. Even in buying stocks at the market peak, you do better in the long run than investing in bonds." Siegel pointed out that a hundred dollars invested in the stock market in September, 1929, with all dividend payments continually reinvested, would have grown to \$565 after thirty years. The same amount invested in long-term government bonds would have grown to just \$141.

These sums are impressive—though biased upward by the fact that unsuccessful companies eventually drop out of the market indices on which they are based—but they do not imply that a further downturn in the stock market is unlikely, or that a bear market couldn't last for many years. It is all a matter of time horizons. In the very long term, over generations the stock market rises in line with the new wealth generated by the economy, and capitalism has proved itself to be an unparalleled wealth creator. Unfortunately, it has also proved susceptible to boom-and-bust cycles. In the twenties, the Dow peaked at 381 on September 3, 1929. The next trading day on which it closed above this level was November 26, 1954, more than a quarter of a century later. In the summer of 1966, the Dow touched 1,000; sixteen years later, in July of 1982, it was languishing at around 800. Setbacks like these have occurred repeatedly in stock markets around the world. In Japan, the Nikkei 225 Index is still almost sixty per cent below its 1989 peak.

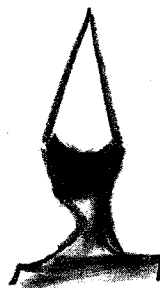
Greenspan referred to the Japanese experience in a December, 1996, speech, in which he also warned against "irrational exuberance," but he hasn't made any sustained effort to explain to the public the risks of investing in the stock market. The degree of ignorance among ordinary investors is frightening. According to a survey done last year by Montgomery Asset Management, a San Francisco firm, the typical mutual-fund investor expects annual returns from the stock market

of thirty-four per cent over the next ten years—which implies that the Dow will be at about 136,500 in 2008.

THE Fed chairman is an unusually well-read economist, and he knows that the similarities between today and the twenties are not confined to stratospheric valuation ratios and a blind faith in stocks. The years that led up to the Great Crash were a period of rapid economic change, with the spread of automobiles, telephones, refrigerators, and radios transforming America into a modern consumer society. Scholars hailed the arrival of a technology-driven "new era," and companies such as RCA and Montgomery Ward behaved very much like the Internet stocks of today. Between March of 1928 and September of 1929, RCA rose (adjusting for stock splits) from 94.5 to 505, despite the fact that it had never paid a dividend.

On numerous occasions, Greenspan has expressed sympathy for the view that we, too, live in a new era (he sometimes uses the phrase "new paradigm"), in which advances in technology and business organization have raised the rate at which the economy can grow without generating inflation. However, he is no utopian: before last week's events unfolded, he believed that stock prices were high by any standards, new era or no new era, and that a sizable correction was all but certain at some point in the near future.

Greenspan doesn't think in terms of "bubbles," which he believes are impossible to identify definitively, except retrospectively. He prefers to look at the assumptions underlying the stock market's level, especially regarding future profits. At the moment, some brokerage analysts are still predicting an annual earnings growth of about thirteen per cent over the next three to five years—a figure that is wildly upbeat, given the international economic outlook and the fact that workers' wages may finally be starting to squeeze profit margins. During the last twelve months, profits have risen at a much slower rate, but the Wall Street experts, whose livelihoods depend on the bull market's continuing, have hardly altered their forecasts. If, as seems likely, pro-



fits continue to falter, the stock market could easily move a lot lower. Even after last week, the price-earnings ratio on the S. & P. 500 remains extremely high by historic standards.

The Fed chairman's recent warning wasn't the first time he had spooked investors: in the last two years, he has sent the Dow reeling several times. Until last week, however, the market has subsequently recovered strongly on each occasion, as investors have followed Siegel's advice to "buy on the dips," and that pattern could well repeat itself this time. Many Wall Street veterans believe that the only way the Fed can subdue the stock market is by raising interest rates, but Greenspan remains extremely reluctant to wield that weapon. He doesn't doubt that the Fed could sink the stock market—a two- or three-point interest-rate hike would torpedo the Dow overnight—but he worries that less drastic action either might not work or might work too well and prompt a crash.

In theory, it might be possible to raise interest rates just enough to deflate the stock market gently, but Greenspan doubts that such a policy would be feasible. He is mindful of the way in which stock-market slides tend to feed on themselves, with unpredictable and potentially drastic consequences, as happened recently in Indonesia, and he fears that an interest-rate hike in the United States could heighten the financial turmoil in Asia. Given these dangers, Greenspan believes that the Fed should avoid risky actions and stick to its traditional role: running the economy at the maximum rate that is consistent with stable or declining inflation.

This is an understandable view, but it amounts to the same policy that was followed by Roy Young in 1929. Young, too, was worried that even a modest interest-rate hike might cause an all-out collapse in domestic and international financial markets, so he avoided tightening monetary policy and merely asked the commercial banks to lend less money to speculators—a tactic known as "direct pressure." For a while, Young's policy appeared to be working. The stock market slid sharply in early February of 1929, when the Fed first warned about excessive speculation, and it tumbled

again in late March. On each occasion, commentators wondered if the end of the bull market was at hand, and investors, duly cautioned, went on fresh buying sprees.

As 1929 progressed, Young became increasingly downcast. He thought that Wall Street had gone berserk, and he guessed what was coming. The Fed could only brace for the "inevitable collapse," he said. However, as the Dow continued on its parabolic course his hands-off policy became untenable. It is a property of speculative booms, from the South Sea Bubble in England during the early eighteenth century to Japan's fever a decade ago, that they eventually take over their host society, dominating popular discourse and distorting economic behavior. Eventually, and almost invariably, the government is forced to restore sanity. That's why the Fed finally did raise the discount rate, in August of 1929, and why Greenspan, despite his misgivings, is likely to do the same thing in the next few months—possibly as early as next week, when Fed policymakers meet in Washington. The official explanation for the coming interest-rate hike will be a revival of inflation fears, but the real reason will be the effect that the stock market is having on the economy.

For three years, the economy has been growing much faster than the Fed expected. In July of 1995, Fed economists predicted that it would grow by between 2.25 per cent and 2.75 per cent the following year; the actual growth in 1996 was 3.4 per cent. A year later, in July of 1996, the Fed projected that economic growth in 1997 would



slow to somewhere between 1.75 per cent and 2.25 per cent; instead, it accelerated to 3.9 per cent. One reason for this fizzy performance was the stock market's rise, which has added about \$12.5 trillion to total household wealth since the end of 1994. (If it had been divided equally—it wasn't, of course—this asset-price inflation would have added about \$125,000 to the paper wealth of each American household.) American families feel richer, and they are spending more; American firms see the cost of capital declining, and they

are investing more. In the second quarter of this year, consumption spending, which makes up about two-thirds of the gross domestic product, grew at an annual rate of 5.8 per cent; nonresidential business investment grew at an annual rate of 11.4 per cent.

Rapid economic growth is good news, since it usually means more income and higher wages, but it can't continue forever without sparking an upturn in inflation. Until recently, the consensus among White House and Fed economists was that the growth rate the economy could sustain in the long run, which is equal to the growth rate of the labor force plus the growth rate of productivity, was about 2.3 per cent. Even under the most optimistic "new era" scenario, however, the sustainable growth rate is now about 2.75 per cent. Greenspan and his colleagues on the Federal Open Market Committee, which sets short-term interest rates, were hoping that the Asian crisis, by reducing the demand for exports from American firms, would slow the economy down to match the sustainable rate, but that hasn't happened. Exports have been hit, but the decline has been more than offset by households continuing to spend their newfound wealth. Economic growth did slow down quite a bit during the second quarter of the year, but that was caused by a big reduction in the amount of investment in inventories by firms, as the result of a surge in inventory holdings in the first quarter. If you take the first half of the year as a unit, the economy is still growing at an annual rate of about 3.5 per cent, well above the Fed's informal speed limit—and it is unlikely that the recent fall in the market will be sufficient to slow things down.

In May, at a meeting of Fed policymakers, Greenspan resisted calls from two colleagues—Jerry Jordan, the president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland, and William Poole, the president of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis—for an immediate increase in interest rates. Jordan and Poole are both monetarists, and, along with Milton Friedman, they believe that the money supply's rapid expansion during the last year indicates that the Fed has been too lax. Greenspan was able to persuade the rest of the Open Market Committee to

stick with his policy of "watchful waiting," but even the Fed chairman now accepts that higher interest rates may be needed to curb growth and inflation. In testimony to Congress last month, he laid out his thinking in what, by his standards, was plain English. "Should pressures on labor resources begin to show through more impressively in cost increases, policy action may be needed to counter any associated tendency for prices to accelerate before it undermines this extraordinary expansion," he said. A week later, some new figures showed that the employment cost index, which Greenspan considers a key measure of inflationary pressures in the economy, rose by 0.9 per cent in the second quarter. This may not sound like much, but during the last twelve months the index has risen by 3.5 per cent, compared with 2.8 per cent in the previous year—an acceleration that is consistent with the view that the economy is operating beyond its sustainable level.

IF and when Greenspan does raise interest rates to head off inflation, stock prices will almost certainly head down again. Bear markets are typically preceded by a shift toward tight money, which makes bond yields seem more attractive and damages the outlook for corporate profits. This was the case in the United States in 1929, 1974, and 1987; in Tokyo in 1989; and, although other factors were also at work, in Southeast Asia last year and in Moscow a couple of months ago. There is little reason to doubt that the pattern will be repeated in the United States.

How far could the stock market tumble? One advantage of the current situation compared with that of 1929 is that there is much less leverage now. In 1929, many speculators borrowed heavily from their brokers to buy stock, a process known as going "on margin," and the total margin debt outstanding amounted to twenty per cent of the stock market's value. Today, partly as a result of New Deal-era reforms, the margin debt outstanding amounts to only about one per cent of the market's value, and a repeat of Black Thursday wouldn't produce the tidal wave of margin calls that ruined so many investors in 1929. However, there wasn't much

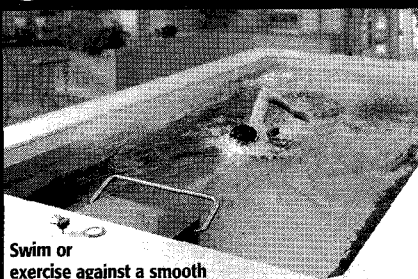
leverage in October of 1987, either, and the Dow still fell by almost twenty per cent on Black Monday, October 19th. Various institutional reforms have been introduced since 1987, but it isn't clear what impact they would have amid large-scale panic selling.

A better question is: What impact would a stock-market collapse have on the economy as a whole? The Great Crash and the Great Depression are synonymous in the minds of many Americans, but they were actually two distinct phenomena. Most economists now believe that the Depression could have been prevented if Young and his colleagues had reacted to the Crash by vigorously increasing the money supply and reducing interest rates. Instead, after increasing liquidity initially in late 1929, the Fed compounded its earlier errors by standing back and allowing an agonizing credit crunch to develop between 1930 and 1933. As a result, more than ten thousand banks collapsed, output fell by a third, and one out of every four workers was unemployed.

That, too, seems unlikely to happen again. "We can be confident the Fed will know what to do in response to a stock-market crash, as it did in 1987," Barry Eichengreen, a Berkeley professor who has written extensively about the interwar economy, told me. "That historical lesson was learned the hard way, but it was learned." After the Dow fell by 508 points on October 19, 1987, the Fed flooded the financial markets with money, and this injection of liquidity prevented a major collapse. The economy stalled slightly, but it didn't go into a recession.

If Greenspan can repeat that trick this time around, he will deserve all the plaudits he has received during the last decade—and more—but it will not be easy. Given the enormous amount of wealth that American families now have tied up in the stock market, a big fall in stock prices would probably lead to a sizable drop in consumer spending, and in all likelihood that would lead to a recession. "The notion that we can avoid a recession indefinitely is, I believe, wishful thinking," Milton Friedman says. "I suspect we will have a recession when the bubble bursts." But, he added, "It need not be more than a mild recession—if the Fed does its job." ♦

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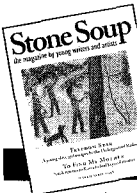
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A CRITIC AT LARGE

THE TROUBLE WITH LENNY

Why we are still taking the measure of Leonard Bernstein's protean gifts.

BY DAVID DENBY

AT first glance, Leonard Bernstein was a bit much. There was the massive, too grandly sculpted head, the chin raised in exaltation, the flowing hair framing a virile Jewish beak and sizable ears; there was the alarmingly mobile body, acting out the emotional significance of the music in voluptuary, anguished, or triumphal movement—what Virgil Thomson lampooned as “corybantic ecstasies.” With bold, eager glances, he took in the orchestra, the audience, and the camera—if one was present—frankly acknowledging his pleasure in being the center of everything.

If we didn't know it beforehand, we might have guessed the truth—that he was slightly lost when there was no one around to admire him. For at first he seemed too eager to please, even a bit moist and sensually overendowed, like a second-rate movie star of the forties. Here was a man without modesty or reserve, and at times he was hard to take: his shoulder-shaking boogie-woogie at the piano, complete with sympathetic groans, could shame the label off a bottle of bourbon. Yet the critics who thought Bernstein merely vain missed the special, self-punishing nature of his ambition; they underestimated how much he put himself at risk, how many things he held himself responsible for. Bernstein tried to pull everything together—serious music and popular music, youngsters and grownups, tragedy and comedy. He wanted America to become a mature musical culture—one that boasted both symphonic masterpieces and a thriving popular music enriched by the masterpieces. He believed in the universal language of art and believed music to

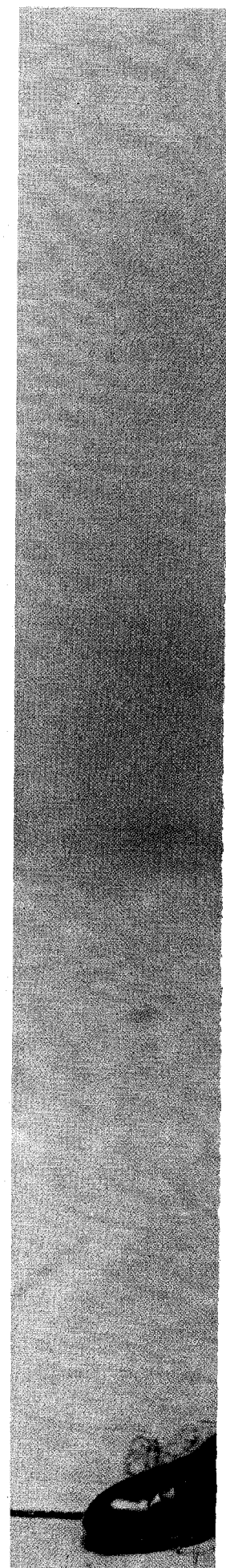
be the art best equipped to dissolve borders and reconcile differences—it was as if Beethoven's Ninth, with its message of universal brotherhood, were constantly playing in his head. Vanity was only a small part of the story.

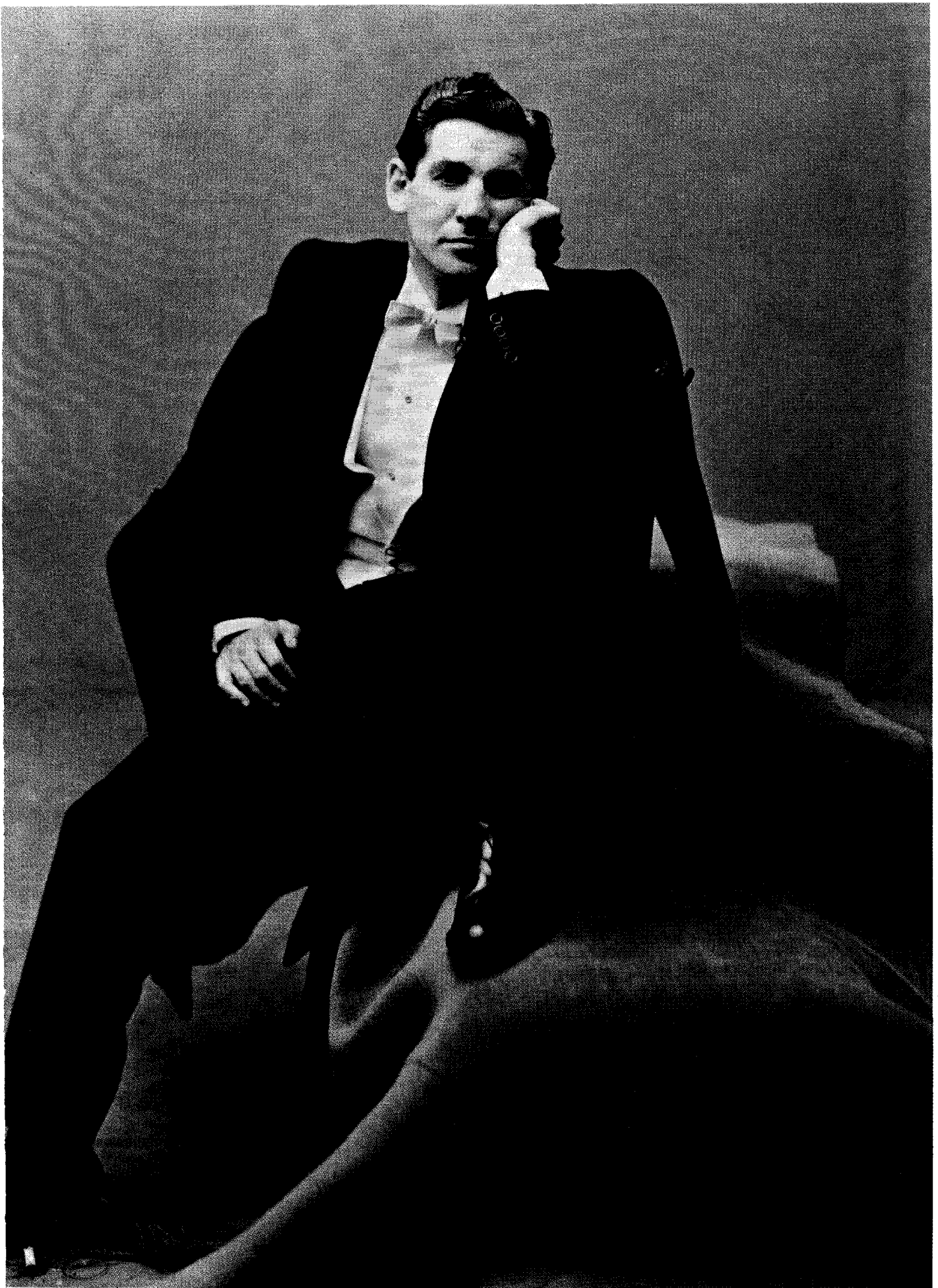
Leonard Bernstein, who would have been eighty on August 25th, died almost eight years ago, and we are still taking his measure, still arguing about him. His death has not yet been absorbed; his career has not been “placed.” In many people's memories of him, there is often a note of anger or disappointment. Stephen Sondheim, his friend and his collaborator on “West Side Story,” recently remarked, “Those who loved his talents as composer, or as conductor, or as host of the Young People's Concerts would like him to have done more of whatever they loved.” It was the fate of this protean figure to have exasperated almost as many people as he pleased, and then, paradoxically, to have left in his wake a huge, unfillable void, as if not just a musician but tremendous cultural possibilities had died on October 14, 1990.

At the moment, despite the presence of many admirable composers and performers, the American classical-music scene seems timid and defensive—an abashed, hat-in-hand suitor for public attention, easily ignored by the media and dismissed without a thought by most of the young. The excitement has gone out of concert life—the sense of a special American cultural destiny which would draw strength in equal measure from European traditions, from openness to the rest of the world, and from its own native vigor. In the current vac-

PHOTOGRAPH BY IRVING PENN

Bernstein, in 1948: Throughout his life, the entertainer coexisted with the serious artist.





COURTESY VOGUE ©1948



"I was afraid I was lying to myself, but, thank God, I passed the polygraph."

uum, Bernstein's exuberant personality and tumultuous career seem a kind of taunt. Eager to bring people to music, he leapt right over conventional notions of good taste; he challenged embarrassment itself. The value of Bernstein's serious compositions remains in dispute, but most music lovers would agree that he was a marvellous Broadway composer and one of the important conductors of the century. Tom Wolfe famously jeered at him as a "Village Explainer," without adding that he was one of the most effective explainers in the history of villages—really a saint of lucidity, once he got going. On television, appearing before millions on CBS in the fifties and sixties with the New York Philharmonic, usually in prime time, Bernstein may have done

more to create music lovers than anyone but the great composers themselves.

ONE has to remember that Bernstein came to prominence with a young and often shaky tradition behind him. It's true that the American nineteenth century boasted a lively amateur musical life—pianos with scores by Beethoven in the proud parlors of bourgeois households, choral societies in big cities, and so on. And in this century the increasing professionalization of music training and a heavy admixture of European émigrés produced superb orchestras in Boston, Philadelphia, and New York by the nineteen-twenties. But before Leonard Bernstein there were no American conductors of world-class stature. Euro-

peans held sway over our orchestras and over the confidence of benefactors. The situation for American composers was problematic. The cranky genius Charles Ives composed in his spare time—like Wallace Stevens, he was an insurance executive; George Gershwin, perhaps the greatest natural songwriter since Schubert, had no better than a spotty background in classical composition before writing "Rhapsody in Blue," and was never sure he was getting things right.

Bernstein wanted to overcome any suggestion of native self-doubt. He understood that to be strictly a serious composer was to be relegated to a small corner of American experience and celebrity, and that to be strictly a conductor or strictly a composer of Broadway shows was insufficiently fulfilling. He asserted the power of European high art, but he wanted to imbue it with America's own folk traditions. A temperament like his, recognizing no limits, bursting all categories, was produced, in part, by the growing American optimism that took hold as the Depression came to an end and as the country, gathering its strength, successfully made war on two fronts. In the arts, the immediate postwar years emerged as an ambitious period for difficult art (bebop, Abstract Expressionism, the neoclassicism of Balanchine), and also for middlebrow art (the musicals of Rodgers and Hammerstein, the plays of Arthur Miller). Bernstein erased the line between the two. He rose to prominence just as television and the long-playing record were becoming mass media, and he reached an enormous audience, eventually surpassing even the heavily publicized Toscanini in fame (though not, initially, in respect).

And yet the conclusion of this success story is painfully ambiguous. To the end, Bernstein remained a violently divided spirit—split not just between his loyalties to America and to Europe but, in his own person, between his sense of obligation, which led him to be very publicly a Jew, a heterosexual, and a composer of serious music, and his need for pleasure, which led him to be a flamboyant conductor, a homosexual, a fantastic talker about music, and a Broadway showman. It may seem a

paradox that a man so disharmonious within himself would try to bring everyone together. But a more unified person could not have raised so many hopes, touched so many people. Whirling about, Bernstein showed his face, at least momentarily, to nearly everyone who wanted to derive some energy from wherever his gaze happened, at that moment, to land.

BERNSTEIN'S way with orchestras was usually genial and imploring, but on one occasion, while rehearsing with the Vienna Philharmonic, he became very testy indeed, and that burst of temper marked a significant moment not only in his own life but in the history of postwar European culture. Bernstein got angry about the Vienna Philharmonic's playing of its own composer, Gustav Mahler, who for some years had been both the music director of the Vienna Court Opera and the chief conductor of the Philharmonic.

In a rehearsal of the Fifth Symphony, in Vienna in the spring of 1972, Bernstein wrathfully accused the orchestra of holding back. The strings weren't playing the tremolos in the great climax of the first movement as if anything was at stake. The men were resisting and grumbling: "*Scheisse-musik*," Bernstein later reported hearing from the ranks. "Shit music." During the Nazi period, Mahler had, of course, been banned; his music had not been played for almost a decade. *Scheissemusik* was Jewish music. For Bernstein, getting the Vienna Philharmonic (and, on one occasion, the Berlin Philharmonic) to play Mahler in the correct style was a way of getting Europeans to accept what they had torn out of themselves—the Jewish contribution to Austro-German culture and life.

Bernstein later put together a video lecture on Mahler entitled "The Little Drummer Boy," in which he maintained that Mahler's genius stemmed from his ability to combine the great Austro-German symphonic tradition with specifically Jewish elements he recalled from his youth. All those wild, exultant horn calls, the echoing effect of offstage bands—weren't these the remembered tones of the shofar sounded from a dis-

tance on the High Holy Days? The naïve village tunes that Mahler altered into sinister mock vulgarities—didn't these recall the raffish klezmer bands, the wandering musicians who played at shtetl weddings? Shame, Bernstein said, played an enormous role in Mahler's temperament—shame at being Jewish (Mahler converted to Catholicism in order to get his Vienna job), and perhaps even "shame at being ashamed of being Jewish." Bernstein's work as interpreter ended the shame forever. He unleashed those pieces with a violence that could be devastating: his 1979 recording of the Ninth Symphony, with the Berlin Philharmonic, and his 1988 recording of the cruelly pessimistic Sixth Symphony, with the Vienna Philharmonic, are among the few musical experiences that can be described without exaggeration as harrowing.

Bernstein's successful struggle with the Vienna Philharmonic was a distinctly American triumph: here was a Jew who arrived on the world stage not as a survivor of the annihilating wars of Europe but as a child of the New World, where lives were remade and artistic fulfillment was, more often than not, hard won. Leonard Bernstein's father, Sam Bernstein (born in Ukraine, in 1892, as Shmuel Yosef), has become almost as famous a stage

father as Leopold Mozart, but for the opposite reason: eager to shield his firstborn son from poverty and ignominy, he discouraged the child's musical ambitions. In Roxbury, Massachusetts, in the late twenties, when Sam Bernstein imagined a career in music for Lenny, he thought of the klezmer—the tattered clarinet player who went from village to village making those awkward sounds that Bernstein later struggled to get the Vienna Philharmonic to re-create.

Bernstein fought against his difficult and demanding father, but he loved him and he also learned a great deal from him. Sam Bernstein found his release in the dancing fervor of the Hasidic tradition, whose public ecstasies may well have been the source of the convulsive Bernstein podium style which, years later, embarrassed so many fastidious Jews in New York. At the breakfast table, Sam dispensed Talmudic wisdom, and Lenny, escaping the old man's sententiousness and gloom, found release in *Yiddishkeit* and parody. At a hotel near the family's summer house, in Sharon, Massachusetts, the fifteen-year-old Leonard directed a drag "Carmen," in which he sang the title role in a red wig, while a certain Beatrice Gordon sang Don José and girls wearing black beards and yarmulkes made up the chorus—a produc-



"I have nothing to say—my clothes say it all."

tion worthy of the young, unbuttoned Woody Allen.

The desire to assimilate into a powerful society—to bring one's explicitly Jewish insights to the Vienna Philharmonic, for example—was not unusual in a second-generation American Jew of Bernstein's time. Neither was the mixture of seriousness and frivolity in the same personality. What was unusual was the strength of the contraries within Bernstein, and his eagerness to act on all of them at once. He was a man energized, rather than paralyzed, by ambivalence.

Throughout his life, Bernstein allowed the entertainer to coexist with the serious artist. By erasing the conventional line between "high" and "low," he became the most original Broadway composer since Kurt Weill, and a radical new kind of conductor.

IN a photograph of Bernstein from the early forties, he sits at a piano, his thick hair ruffled, a cigarette dangling from his lips: he is as much an icon of glamorous insouciance—elegant and potent—as Sinatra or Ellington; he gives off the aura of a jazz musician playing among the drinkers and sexual adventurers in an after-hours club. When Bernstein was very young, and was still undergoing training as a conductor at the Curtis Institute, in Philadelphia, he would escape the dull town and his stern teacher at the music school, Fritz Reiner, and slip into Manhattan, where he would visit the bars, talk with Aaron Copland, who had be-

come a mentor, and—just as productively—horse around with his nightclub-performing friends Betty Comden and Adolph Green.

Comden and Green were a fixture of Village clubs, and Bernstein, after graduating from Harvard in 1939, had started hanging out with them. On the album "Leonard Bernstein—Wonderkind" one can hear an extended musical satire entitled "The Girl with the Two Left Feet," a spoof of Hollywood and media hype, nineteen-forties style, in which Bernstein plays the piano accompaniment, rapidly switching from one pastiche style to another with extraordinary delicacy and pointed rhythm. Bernstein's lighthearted side had found a home, with perfect collaborators. When the late choreographer Jerome Robbins came to him in 1943 with an idea for a ballet—three sailors on a twenty-four-hour leave in New York—Bernstein wrote the jazzy, syncopated score "Fancy Free," a work of unending rhythmic energy and variety.

"On the Town," the show that grew out of "Fancy Free," is full of pell-mell dance rhythms that are always a little trickier and more insistent than one expects. Stravinsky and Copland had borrowed from jazz for their symphonic compositions; now Broadway dancers learned to move to rhythms borrowed from Stravinsky and Copland. Bernstein's friend Copland possessed a superb instinct for centralizing the various American folk styles into a classical idiom that seemed at once informal and charmed. Bernstein

added exuberance and noise: when he jumped across borders, the music generated by that leap sounded brash and optimistic even when he was trying to be tough.

Drums and brass in punishing fortissimo; jagged rhythms not so much sprung as detonated; stabbing attacks by unison strings which give way to passages of almost desperate yearning—this is the characteristic full-throated, heart-heaving Bernstein assault, any ten bars of which evoke the New York of the fifties, a troubled city in which the postwar euphoria has been replaced by new social anxieties and corrosive violence. In his first and only film score—for "On the Waterfront," the 1954 Elia Kazan melodrama about union corruption on the Hoboken docks—Bernstein ignored the traditional hokey mood-painting of American film music and produced music that is richly symphonic throughout. The startling intrusion of such sophisticated stuff in a working-class drama raised the movie to an emotionalism of almost shocking vehemence. The entertainer at the piano had developed a genius for pathos and violence, which culminated in the boundary-jumping masterpiece of 1957, "West Side Story."

If you first heard the show when you were young, its plangent melodies and its jittery tensions and outraged tenderness became inextricably mixed with the emotions of adolescence. Usually, it's not a good idea to revisit such a moment, but recently—expecting to be shamed by old passions and bored by the sorrows and hopes of fifties liberalism—I listened again to the original-cast album and was stunned by how powerful and beautifully wrought the score is. The cannonading drums and brass return from "On the Waterfront," but much of the composing and orchestration (which Bernstein did with Sid Ramin and Irwin Kostal) is astonishingly delicate—those gently undulating strings and burbling winds under "Something's Coming,"



"Do we still have Paris? Just thought I'd check."

and the way "The Dance at the Gym," after a heated, raucous beginning, quiets down and ends with an elegant little dance version of "Maria."

If "West Side Story" seems quaint and dated as a lyrical evocation of neighborhood turf wars, musically it is remarkably prescient. Borrowing again, Bernstein reached out to Latino dance music—and also, perhaps, to serious Latin-American composers, like Carlos Chávez and Silvestre Revueltas—with the result that the symphonic mambos and other transformed popular dance music in "West Side Story" now seem an early forecast of how important Latin music and culture would become in America. Despite its tragic story, the show is a Pan-American celebration—and a summing up of Bernstein's New York work. When the beautiful "Tonight" is reprised, with another solo voice and with the two gangs (in a different rhythm) joining the lovers, the cross-rhythms coalesce, and suddenly Bernstein is where he wants to be—soaring with Mozart and Verdi in a five-part ensemble. It's a thrilling moment, but it's a heartbreaking moment, too, because for us it effectively ends Bernstein's connection, as a composer, with the moods and rhythms of New York. After "West Side Story," he made at least five more attempts to write a Broadway show—but the efforts came to nothing, or to nothing that audiences wanted to listen to.

Arthur Laurents, who wrote the book for "West Side Story," said recently of his later attempts to collaborate with Bernstein, "He wanted to make 'an important statement.' But you can't start work that way." For Bernstein, who had once loved to

tease Bizet and joke around in Yiddish, writing a symphonically conceived show with brilliant dance music and superb melodic invention wasn't enough.

ONE day in the sixties, as I was standing on a corner on Fifth Avenue, I looked up, and suddenly there was Bernstein, arrayed in the back of his car, a silver Lincoln convertible. He sat with one arm stretched across the top of the leather seat and glanced vivaciously this way and that, returning the stares of people who were gazing at him, including my own, which he acknowledged with a slight but definite nod. I was tongue-tied, even though for years I had had conversations with him in my head: "Why don't you perform Shostakovich's Eighth and Tenth as well as the Fifth and Seventh?" and "Why was your tempo so slow for the 'Siegfried Idyll'?" And so on. It never occurred to me that there was anything strange about

these imagined questions, and now I know why. He encouraged them. He feared that the symphony orchestra was dying, and he believed that it could be brought back to life only by a more intense exchange, on all levels, with the audience.

The crisis wasn't obvious to many people at that time. When Bernstein and his audience were growing up, classical music belonged to the mainstream of American culture. There was lots of it in the schools and on network radio—CBS had regular concerts, and NBC, of course, formed a virtuoso orchestra for Toscanini in 1937 and kept it in concert halls and on the air (and later on television) for seventeen years. In the fifties, NBC-TV occasionally offered opera—including Bernstein's "Trouble in Tahiti"—to a sizable public. In Hollywood, many distinguished European composers-in-exile wrote for the movies in the thirties and forties, and classical music was treated with jaunty affection not



only in Disney's tiresome "Fantasia" but—more tellingly—in Warner Bros. cartoons.

The situation with serious new music was more troubled. After the war, the composers who followed the atonal gospel of Schoenberg and Webern had taken over much of the avant-garde and the universities, and were speaking to a small, scarily exclusive group of people. There had been a decisive break with the music public. A recent essay in the *New York Review of Books* entitled "Who's Afraid of the Avant-Garde?," by the pianist and musicologist Charles Rosen, argued that serious new music has always been difficult to understand. But Rosen, cannily refusing to endorse any particular composer while attacking philistines in the audience and the music business, ignores the realities of the situation. For the most advanced composers of the fifties and sixties, the very function of music had changed. In a famous article in *High Fidelity*, Milton Babbitt happily compared the work of serious academic composers to that of researchers in advanced physics.

For Bernstein, however, music without an audience was unimaginable. He was distressed that the symphony as a popular form was fading. The symphony, Bernstein thought, was, by its nature, a noble invention—one devoted to conflict and resolution, to trials met and overcome—and after the Second World War few people had the conviction to create that sort of drama anymore. Nevertheless, when Bernstein took over the New York Philharmonic, in 1958, he was determined to revive the symphony orchestra as a public institution.

First, he realized that the relationship of conductor to audience had to change. Communication, not decorum, was what mattered. In Bernstein's early Philharmonic years, Thursday night was devoted to "preview concerts," from which critics were barred. He would talk about the pieces on the program, sometimes performing a short analysis at the piano, and even interrupting midway to deliver a commentary on it. Many of the programs he devised were part of elaborate thematic festivals: music history had to be summarized and reconfigured, directions

suggested, hopes held out. He tried to design programs that would both educate and electrify the audience.

At the same time, he cleared away the usual pomposity and condescension of "music appreciation." In his first broadcast, in 1954, for CBS's culture show "Omnibus," he stood on a studio floor that reproduced the opening page of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and moved groups of musicians around from staff to staff to show how Beethoven had decided to produce the special sound of the opening chords. He even played Beethoven's discarded sketches for earlier versions of the first movement. On another television show—this one for children—he got the Philharmonic to play Haydn in the "wrong" style. A European conductor might have asked, "What could be the point of such foolish demonstrations?" Bernstein would have retorted that, for an American who had inherited so little, music was always in a state of becoming—that it was never something that could be taken for granted as a static series of masterpieces.

In the Young People's Concerts, on CBS, everything in his grand mission came together—learning and eros, moral seriousness and entertainment. These shows are classics of barrier-crossing pedagogic art at mid-century, as significant, in their way, as Tennessee Williams's plays and Robert Lowell's poetry. Pleasure was the key, and, since music had certain building blocks that were used again and again, nothing could be ruled out of consideration. Bernstein did shows on melody, on sonata form, on the sound of an orchestra, on humor in music, and also on folk music and jazz. He was full of mischief: he ravished the children with flattery, playing excerpts of difficult works by Webern and Stravinsky, and then, in the next moment, drawing on examples from pop—Elvis, the Beatles, Simon and Garfunkel—all of which he obviously loved.

BERNSTEIN was an incomparable teacher. But how good a music director was he? As a student in New York in the early and middle sixties, I went to the Philharmonic quite a bit. I heard some coarse playing, some pieces obviously underrehearsed, some inter-

pretative ideas that didn't quite work. Still, I cannot remember many dull or routine concerts. He was a superb conductor of American music and modern music in general—Stravinsky, Bartók, Berg, and, best of all, Shostakovich. In addition to his great commitment to Mahler, he revived Sibelius and the Danish symphonist Carl Nielsen. He could be wayward in Romantic music, but there were interests and achievements that no one could argue with—his surprising dedication to the unglamorous music of Haydn, for instance, which revealed a robust, fearless genius whose roots lay in peasant dances and folk music.

At first, the New York press was enthusiastic, but in the early sixties things began to turn sour. Harold C. Schonberg, in those days the chief music critic of the *Times*, later admitted, "There was a time, for many years, when [Bernstein] could not get a good review in a New York paper." Bernstein was accused of salesmanship and "cultural vaudeville"; he was repeatedly called exhibitionistic and an egotist who wouldn't let music speak for itself. But from the vantage point of the late nineties we can see that Bernstein may have been onto something that the critics, safe in their reviewing cocoons, did not see. In the twentieth century, serious music could no longer speak for itself—not in America, at least, where rock was speaking louder. For the young, classical music no longer fulfilled its old American role as a form of cultural aspiration. Bernstein's show-biz approach—his mission to reverse this trend—now seems like the stoniest realism.

And there was something else that the American critics were bothered by, though they could not easily discuss it: the unmistakably erotic element in Bernstein's conducting. ("EKSTASE, EXZESS, EXALTATION" is how a Viennese newspaper headline put it.) Embarrassment is the superego of taste, and the New York critics were embarrassed by Bernstein. The point that many of them missed about him was that his eroticism was tied to his feeling for narrative: to a concert audience, his movements provided a visual analogue to the emotional significance of the music, in all its narrative unfolding of fear, fortitude, defeat, triumph,

SKETCHBOOK BY MICHAEL ROBERTS

OFF DUTY





"This is Norman's little bureau of alcohol, tobacco, and firearms."

and renewal. Bernstein released the ecstatic element in music; if a piece didn't have an ecstatic element, he didn't conduct it.

In early 1966, Bernstein enjoyed his first great triumphs in Vienna, conducting "Falstaff" and "Das Lied von der Erde." Vienna was astonished not only by Bernstein's technical skills but by his emotional fluency. Then the comedy began. Bernstein resumed his year with the New York Philharmonic, and the *Times'* Schonberg immediately announced, "Maturity seems to be creeping in." By the seventies, after repeated triumphs in Vienna and elsewhere, Bernstein had ascended to the conductors' pantheon. The New York critics' dislike of Bernstein had been trumped by an unembarrassed European culture, which was still in touch with its nineteenth-century glories.

He left the Philharmonic in 1969, at the age of fifty, three years after his Vienna debut. He wanted more time to compose, but he also wanted to get out of New York. He soon stopped doing programs for American television, and new American compositions seemed

to interest him very little. Perhaps he thought that the way to raise American musical culture to world status was to compose a great work himself.

O MY father, ancient, hallowed, lonely disappointed father, rejected ruler of the universe. Handsome, jealous lord and lover, angry wrinkled old majesty, I want to pray." So begins the spoken narration of Bernstein's Symphony No. 3 ("Kaddish"), completed in 1963. The narration consists of angry contention with the Lord: Jacob wrestles once again with the angel. The Lord, it seems, has lost faith in men. Shrieking, dissonant brass chords follow, then syncopated choral passages with furious clapping noises and taunting shouts of "Amen! Amen!" Adonai, however, is given one last chance to renew the covenant: he is urged to "believe, believe!"

It seems a parody, a spoof of Jewish existential anguish; recently, when I put on a recording of it, my wife looked at me in horror, and my noisy fifteen-year-old son, stunned, sat down glumly, as if he were being punished.

The themes of "Kaddish" are loss of faith in God and God's abandonment of man. If the feelings are mutual, why make such a fuss? But Bernstein was not the kind of man to express his dismay in a modest threnody for string orchestra. He wanted to write an enormous, Mahlerian work, a "Resurrection Symphony" for the postwar period. The emotional progression of his big pieces is always the same: despair, furious protest, then hesitant and, at last, triumphant renewal. Faith dawns again.

"Kaddish" is particularly dismaying because Bernstein, working with Comden and Green, had satirized this kind of temples-clutching seriousness twenty years earlier. How to account for the change? Some of Bernstein's earlier concert works had carried a lighter load—for instance, the nifty little jazz-at-the-symphony piece "Prelude, Fugue, and Riffs" (1949) and his "Serenade" for violin, strings, percussion, and harp (1954), which has pages of lovely writing for the violin and a great, striding vamp that brings the work to a jaunty conclusion. His "Chichester Psalms" (1965) is a setting of Biblical texts, but the music, adapted from a Comden and Green project that didn't pan out, is first jubilant and then serenely happy; it is perhaps his single most successful concert piece.

Neither Bernstein's successes nor his follies occur in strict chronological order. The early (1944) Symphony No. 1 ("Jeremiah"), inspired by the Babylonians' destruction of Jerusalem, has an eloquent first movement, with unison strings punctuated by stern eruptions of brass and timpani, but the middle movement sounds like something that Cecil B. De Mille might have considered for the martial scenes in "The Ten Commandments." The best thing in the Second Symphony—"The Age of Anxiety" (1949), inspired by the Auden poem—is the fifth movement, "Masque," in which the piano and the xylophone, lithe and happy together, produce the scintillating effect of needles flashing through the air. But the symphony ends badly, in a banal affirmation that Bernstein tried to pass off as satire.

In his symphonies, a natural lyrical impulse got overtaken by the hectoring

political stances that had surrounded him as a young man. Bernstein was influenced first by the popular-front attitudes of the thirties and later by the resistance to McCarthyism and the struggles against racism and anti-Semitism, all of which imbued liberalism with a high ethical fervor. The Holocaust and the birth of Israel extended these emotions into a mood of redemptive anger. He was a liberal who took things personally, and he confused "speaking out" with politics. Unfortunately, he began to confuse it with art, too.

This is a painful story, because his failures were inseparable from his many heroic and original qualities. His combining of such a number of talents, which made it easy for him to cross borders, got him into trouble when he tried to compose serious music—not because he spread himself too thin but because he spread himself too thick. He loved to conduct, but he gave so much of himself to conducting that after a period of frenzied activity he would feel trapped, as if conducting were a violation of his true nature.

"I don't have a chance to get acquainted with myself," he complained in 1949, before one of his periodic withdrawals from the podium. This sentiment was repeated again and again, often as a vacation approached. Once the vacation started, however, he was usually in trouble. Exhausted, he would swim, play mind-bending word games, spend time with his family, and meet with collaborators, but the composing, when he did it, grew harder as he got older. "I am tortured by the passing of time," he wrote to his old friend the composer Lukas Foss during a vacation in 1967. "Each day is a horror because it leads me one day closer to the end of summer; and the guilt of not working is intolerable."

What did he mean by "getting acquainted with" himself, anyway? He was a man who lived with a constantly shifting self—or, rather, many selves. In 1976, after he had been married for twenty-five years to the Chilean actress Felicia Montealegre, and had brought up three children with her, he left his wife

for a young man—for many young men. But when Felicia fell gravely ill with cancer he blamed himself for it, perhaps feeling guilty over the sexual behavior that he was unwilling—or unable—to suspend. Pleasure and misery seemed intertwined within him, as did celebrity and self-disgust. "He wanted to be everything," Sondheim told me. "He wanted to be a philosopher. If he had had the time, he would have gone to India with the Beatles."

Bernstein said, over and over again, that thematic "development" (i.e., Beethoven) was the great contribution of Western music. But perhaps a composer can generate an entire piece out of a few notes—as Beethoven did in the opening movement of the Fifth Symphony—only by possessing a consciousness that rejects virtually everything except the possibilities of manipulating G's and E-flats. "Development" requires intellectual unity: a man possessing many selves will instinctively wander into pastiche.

For the most part, when Bernstein ventured away from the theatre or the ballet stage, he confronted his compositional weaknesses by making statements: he constructed ethical projects devoted to big humanist or religious themes, and he patched the music together from many sources. Most of his serious work lacks the toughness and rigor of great modern music: he flirts with dissonance, with stridency, with harshly disconsolate moods, but he doesn't develop these gestures into the kind of formal structures that might raise them above mere portentous statements.

A FEW Sundays ago, I turned on the radio and fell into the middle of a strange and alarming performance of the Mozart Requiem. I had grown used to John Eliot Gardiner's way with this score: period instruments, small chorus and orchestra, a great rhythmic aliveness, and sudden, fierce shafts of light. Surely the style of the performance



"Jessica has an idea about going to the beach that she'd like to pitch you."

on the radio was all wrong: big modern orchestra and chorus, magnificent sonority, and some tempos that were astonishingly slow. The *Lacrimosa* was a hesitant, agonizing trek to Judgment Day, as if the guilty souls had lost all hope of God's mercy. At the end of the concluding fugue, the last chord was sustained as an enormously long *diminuendo*. Mozart died while writing the Requiem and the conductor obviously didn't want to let go of the music; he wanted to stretch it into the nineteenth century, into immortality. As I listened, Gardiner's way with the Requiem began to seem brusque, lacking mystery and awe: it wasn't a religious experience, whereas this mad interpretation was full of dread and exultation. The performance, of course, was Bernstein's, recorded in 1988 with the Bavarian Radio Symphony and Chorus.

Again and again, in his later years, Bernstein went to the edge. He would slow music down until it threatened to lose its shape, and then, emphasizing the grandeur and sense of victory embedded in a piece, pull things together at the brink of dissolution.

His performing style changed, I think, after he gave the Norton Lectures, at Harvard, in 1973. In these

talks, which were videotaped and published as a book, "The Unanswered Question," Bernstein's intention was to deliver a knockout blow to the serialist avant-garde. He makes a complicated series of analogies with Chomskyan linguistics: tonality, like certain basic rules of syntax, is universal, a habit rooted in human nature. The contemporary avant-garde, he argues, has neutered music, turning it emotionally gray, for, if all twelve tones become equal, music loses its dramatic thrust. Tonality offers a way of connecting emotion to specific sounds; it is a natural language for telling those heroic tales that are embodied in the symphony. Revelling in this drama, Bernstein became one of the last conductors to offer spiritual struggle and triumph as music's meaning.

The wrenching style of his own later compositions may also have been driven by personal unhappiness. In the late seventies and eighties, he was fêted everywhere. He brought down the Berlin Wall with Beethoven's Ninth, and appeared at festivals, consecrations, and commemorations; the musician who once played at the drop of a hat now had his performances recorded or filmed on the spot. But he had turned into a

peculiarly unstable sort of ceremonial personage. Mixing drink with painkillers, he became rambling and reckless in public. In his performances of European masterpieces, the turbulence found a resolution. But there was no release from the frustration he felt over his inability to compose a great work. "If I knew what I wanted to say," he told a friend on his deathbed, "I wouldn't be sitting here now."

His very late work "Arias and Barcarolles" may not be a masterpiece, but this suite of songs about family life, with texts by Bernstein's mother, by the Yiddish poet Yankev-Yitskhok Segal, and by Bernstein himself, has a great and consoling sweetness. Bernstein ransacks the twentieth century's advanced musical styles: there's a *sprechstimme* aria for a discontented wife, goosed twelve-tone rows, jazz riffs for children who won't go to bed. The conductor Michael Tilson Thomas, who has recorded the score, has praised Bernstein's way of teasing his old enemy atonality by turning it into gamesmanship. But there's something else: in this very late score, the parodist mocking his father's rules returns, and so does the father's son, the husbandly Jew, longing for the everyday troubles of family life. It's a wistful, satisfying ending to Bernstein's career as a composer.

IN the summer of 1987, in Germany, he sat before a student orchestra wearing a billowing pink shirt; his belly protruded; he outdid Falstaff in his indiscretions, embarrassing the serious-minded *Kinder* with talk of sex and adolescence and of laying one's head on the earth and listening to the grass grow. (They were rehearsing "The Rite of Spring.") He might have been someone's decadent bachelor uncle at a party. Yet the rehearsal got better and better, and the performance—a videotape of it is available from Kultur—is remarkably detailed and expressive for a group of student players.

Bernstein taught throughout his entire life—on television, in classrooms, in front of student orchestras. It was the only one of



"I could elaborate on that four-month gap in my employment history, but then I'd have to kill you."

THE MERCY

The ship that took my mother to Ellis Island eighty-three years ago was named the Mercy. She remembers trying to eat a banana without first peeling it and seeing her first orange in the hands of a young Scot, a seaman who gave her a bite and wiped her mouth for her with a red bandanna and taught her the word "orange," saying it patiently over and over. A long autumn voyage, the days darkening with the black waters calming as night came on; then nothing as far as her eyes could see and space without limit rushing off to the corners of creation. She prayed in Russian and Yiddish to find her family in New York, prayers unheard or misunderstood or perhaps ignored by all the powers that swept the waves of darkness before she woke, that kept the Mercy afloat while smallpox raged among the passengers and crew until the dead were buried at sea with strange prayers in a tongue she could not fathom. The Mercy, I read on the yellowing pages of a book I located in a windowless room of the library on Forty-second Street, sat thirty-one days offshore in quarantine before the passengers disembarked. There a story ends. Other ships arrived, Tancred out of Glasgow, the Neptune, registered as Danish, Umberto IV, the list goes on for pages, November gives way to winter, the sea pounds this alien shore. Italian miners from Piemonte dig under towns in western Pennsylvania only to rediscover the same nightmare they left at home. A nine-year-old girl travels all night by train with one suitcase and an orange. She learns that mercy is something you can eat again and again while the juice spills over your chin, you can wipe it away with the back of your hands and you can never get enough.

—PHILIP LEVINE

his activities that resolved the tension between obligation and pleasure, and he never seemed to tire of it or feel guilty about it. He met young sexual partners by teaching, but his teaching was also erotic in a larger sense: he inspired young musicians, passing on to them life and power. In his last years, he had a particular need for disciples: perhaps it was a way of surpassing his father by being generous as well as wise.

At the moment, Bernstein's pedagogic genius falls into a culture that is

far more ignorant of—and indifferent to—classical music than was the society that nurtured his early success. He would have hated the fragmentation and ethnic chauvinism of the nineties—the attack on European culture and the authority of the masterpiece tradition—and he would probably have had little faith in "crossover," in which pop musicians play in classical concerts and neither pop nor classical quite gets its due. He wanted to combine musical virtues and styles into

new hybrid forms, not to water things down. While Bernstein was working hard in the United States, he advanced the project of creating a major American musical culture, but that project faded when he withdrew from New York. In one of those baffling American cultural scandals, the Young People's Concerts have been widely broadcast in Japan and Europe, but corporate sponsorship cannot be found to rebroadcast them here. (They are, however, available on video, from the Leonard Bernstein Society, in New York.)

Commenting on the media's general lack of interest in serious art, Bernstein's most celebrated protégé, Michael Tilson Thomas, says, "There's now an agreement that no major statement can be made in high culture, and that's just the result of the endless hyping of pop." Tilson Thomas is voicing a familiar complaint, but one must point out that the media have become so compartmentalized that even another Leonard Bernstein would not command center stage. Nonetheless, if classical music seems stunted these days, Bernstein's influence still sends up shoots. The recent return to a broad-gauged tonality among serious composers—a trend that was well under way during Bernstein's lifetime—certainly received impetus from his compositional practice. The brilliant young composer Aaron Jay Kernis describes Bernstein as a "role model for a lot of American composers," praising, in particular, Bernstein's assimilation of big-band swing and Latin elements into his music. Among the leading American conductors, Leonard Slatkin, at the National Symphony Orchestra, and Tilson Thomas, in San Francisco, have, with notable success, absorbed from Bernstein the lesson that an American music director must both lead the public and consult with it.

In time, Bernstein's failures will drop away, and he will be remembered for his best work—his masterpieces of composing, conducting, and teaching. But at the moment his death seems part of a cultural defeat. Not only has the sense of risk-taking disappeared from the classical scene but so has the quality that was Bernstein's supreme gift to America's postwar cultural life—the fun. ♦



ANNALS OF BEHAVIOR

DO PARENTS MATTER?

For decades, psychologists have looked to some combination of nature and nurture to explain how children turn out. But a radical new theory—developed by a grandmother from suburban New Jersey—may change everything.

BY MALCOLM GLADWELL

THE idea that will make Judith Rich Harris famous came to her, unbidden, on the afternoon of January 20, 1994. At the time, Harris was a textbook writer, with no doctorate or academic affiliation, working from her home in suburban New Jersey. Because of a lupus-like illness, she doesn't have the strength to leave the house, and she'd spent that morning in bed. By early afternoon, though, she was at her desk, glancing through a paper by a prominent psychologist about juvenile delinquency, and for some reason a couple of unre-

markable sentences struck her as odd: "Delinquency must be a social behavior that allows access to some desirable resource. I suggest that the resource is mature status, with its consequent power and privilege." It is an observation consistent with our ideas about what it means to grow up. Teen-agers rebel against being teen-agers, against the restrictions imposed on them by adults. They smoke because only adults are supposed to smoke. They steal cars because they are too young to have cars. But Harris was suddenly convinced that the

paper had it backward. "Adolescents aren't trying to be like adults—they are trying to *contrast* themselves with adults," she explains. "And it was as if a light had gone on in the sky. It was one of the most exciting things that have ever happened to me. In a minute or two, I had the germ of the theory, and in ten minutes I had enough of it to see that it was important."

If adolescents didn't want to be like adults, it was because they wanted to be like other adolescents. Children were identifying with and learning from other

NANNY VONNEGUT



children, and Harris realized that once you granted that fact all the conventional wisdom about parents and family and child-rearing started to unravel. Why, for example, do the children of recent immigrants almost never retain the accents of their parents? How is it that the children of deaf parents manage to learn how to speak as well as children whose parents speak to them from the day they were born? The answer has always been that language is a skill acquired laterally—that what children pick up from other children is at least as important as what they pick up at home. Harris was asking whether this was true more generally: what if children also learn the things that make them who they are—that shape their characters and personalities—from their peer group? This would mean that, in some key sense, parents don't much matter—that what's important is not what children learn inside the home but what they learn *outside* the home.

"I was sitting and thinking," Harris told me, looking bright-eyed as she clutched a tall glass of lemonade. She is

tiny—a fragile, elfin grandmother with a mop of gray hair and a little-girl voice. We were in her kitchen, looking out on the green of her back yard. "I told my husband, Charlie, about it. I had signed a contract to write a developmental-psychology textbook, and I wasn't quite ready to give it up. But the more I thought about it the more I realized I couldn't go on writing developmental-psychology textbooks, because I could no longer say what my publishers wanted me to say." Over the next six months, Harris immersed herself in the literature of social psychology and cultural anthropology. She read studies of group behavior in primates and unearthed studies from the nineteen-fifties of pre-adolescent boys. She couldn't conduct any experiments of her own, because she didn't belong to an academic institution. She couldn't even use a proper academic library, because the closest university to her was Rutgers, which was forty-five minutes away, and she didn't have the strength to leave her house for more than a few hours at a time. So she went to the local public library and ordered academic texts through

interlibrary loan and sent for reprints of scientific articles through the mail, and the more she read the more she became convinced that her theory could tie together many of the recent puzzling findings in behavioral genetics and developmental psychology. In six weeks, in August and September of 1994, she wrote a draft and sent it off to the academic journal *Psychological Review*. It was an act of singular audacity, because *Psychological Review* is one of the most prestigious journals in psychology, and prestigious academic journals do not, as a rule, publish the musings of stay-at-home grandmothers without Ph.D.s. But her article was accepted, and in the space below her name, where authors typically put "Princeton University" or "Yale University" or "Oxford University," Harris proudly put "Middletown, New Jersey." Harris listed her Compuserve address in a footnote, and soon she was inundated with E-mail, because what she had to say was so compelling and so surprising and, in a wholly unexpected way, so sensible that everyone in the field wanted to know more. Who are



"You don't get an office. You get cargo pants."

you? scholars asked. Where did you come from? Why have I never heard of you before?

At this point, Harris's health was not good. Her autoimmune disorder began to attack her heart and lungs, and she sometimes wondered how long she had to live. But, at the urging of some of her new friends in academe, she set out to write a book, and somehow in the writing of it she became stronger. That book, "The Nurture Assumption," will be published this fall, and it is a graceful, lucid, and utterly persuasive assault on virtually every tenet of child development. It begins, "This book has two purposes: first, to dissuade you of the notion that a child's personality—what used to be called 'character'—is shaped or modified by the child's parents; and second, to give you an alternative view of how the child's personality is shaped." On the back cover are enthusiastic blurbs from David Lykken, of the University of Minnesota; Robert Sapolsky, of Stanford; Dean Keith Simonton, of the University of California at Davis; John Bruer, of the James S. McDonnell Foundation; and Steven Pinker, of

M.I.T.—which, in the social-science business, is a bit like writing a book on basketball and having it endorsed by the starting five of the Chicago Bulls. This week, Harris will travel to San Francisco for the annual convention of the American Psychological Association, where she will receive a prize for her *Psychological Review* article.

"It's as if the gods were making up to me all that they had done to me previously," Harris told me. "It was the best gift I could have ever gotten: an idea. It wasn't something that I could have known in advance. But, as it turned out, it was what I wanted most in the world—an idea that would give a direction and a purpose to my life."

JUDITH HARRIS's big idea—that peers matter much more than parents—runs counter to nearly everything that a century of psychology and psychotherapy has told us about human development. Freud put parents at the center of the child's universe, and there they have remained ever since. "They fuck you up, your mum and dad. / They may not mean to, but they do," the poet

Philip Larkin memorably wrote, and that perspective is fundamental to the way we have been taught to understand ourselves. When we go to a therapist, we talk about our parents, in the hope that coming to grips with the events of childhood can help us decipher the mysteries of adulthood. When we say things like "That's the way I was raised," we mean that children instinctively and preferentially learn from their parents, that parents can be good or bad role models for children, that character and personality are passed down from one generation to the next. Child development has been, in many ways, concerned with understanding children *through* their parents.

In recent years, however, this idea has run into a problem. In a series of careful and comprehensive studies (among them the famous Minnesota studies of twins separated at birth) behavioral geneticists

have concluded that about fifty per cent of the personality differences among people—traits such as friendliness, extroversion, nervousness, openness, and so on—are attributable to our genes, which means that the other half must be attributable to the environment. Yet when researchers have set out to look for this environmental influence they haven't been able to find it. If the example of parents were important in a child's development, you'd expect to see a consistent difference between the children of anxious and inexperienced parents and the children of authoritative and competent parents, even after taking into account the influence of heredity. Children who spend two hours a day with their parents should be different from children who spend eight hours a day with their parents. A home with lots of books should result in a different kind of child from a home with very few books. In other words, researchers should have been able to find some causal link between the specific social environment parents create for their children and the way those children turn out. They haven't.

One of the largest and most rigorous studies of this kind is known as the Colorado Adoption Project. Between 1975 and 1982, a group of researchers at the University of Colorado, headed by Robert Plomin, one of the world's leading behavioral geneticists, recruited two hundred and forty-five pregnant women from the Denver area who planned to give up their children for adoption. The researchers then followed the children into their new homes, giving them a battery of personality and intelligence tests at regular intervals throughout their childhood and giving similar tests to their adoptive parents. For the sake of comparison, the group also ran the same set of tests on a control group of two hundred and forty-five parents and their biological children. For the latter group, the results were pretty much as one might expect: in intellectual ability and certain aspects of personality, the kids proved to be fairly similar to their parents. The scores of the adopted kids, however, had nothing whatsoever in common with the scores of their adoptive parents: these children were no more similar in personality or intellectual skills to the people who reared them, fed them, clothed them, read to them, taught them, and loved them all their lives than they were to any two adults taken at random off the street.

Here is the puzzle. We think that children resemble their parents because of both genes and the home environment, both nature and nurture. But, if nurture matters even a little, why don't the adopted kids have at least some greater-than-chance similarities to their adoptive parents? The Colorado study says that the only reason we are like our parents is that we share their genes, and that—by any measures of cognition and personality—when there is no genetic inheritance there is no resemblance.

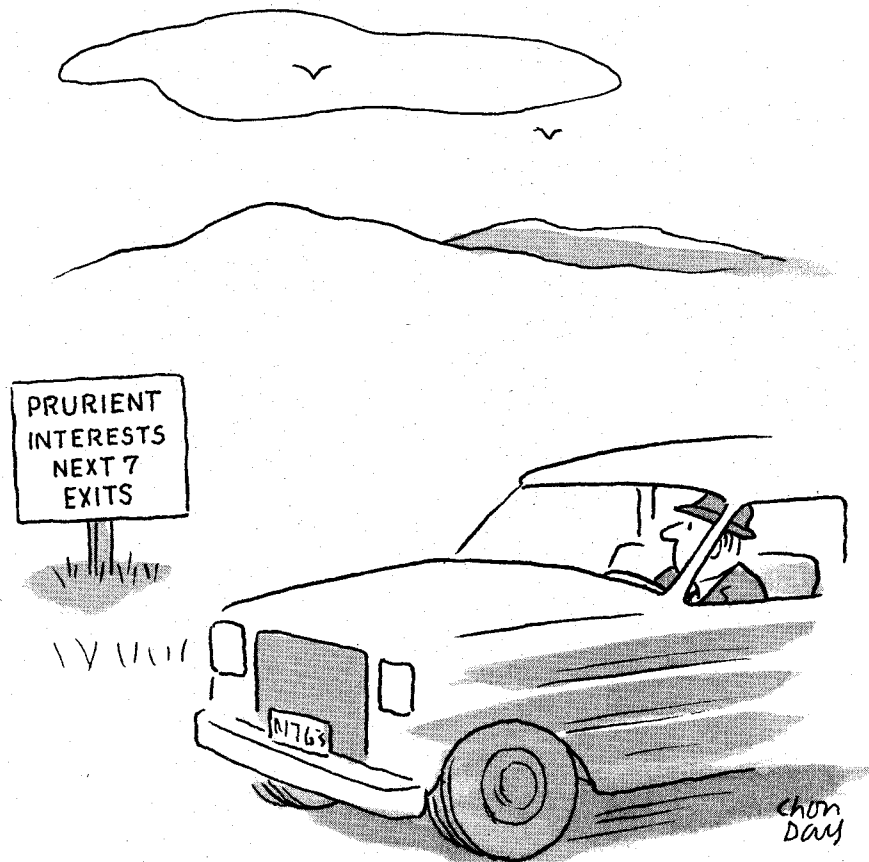
This is the question that so preoccupied Harris on that winter morning four and a half years ago. She knew that most people in psychology had responded to findings like those of the Colorado project by turning an ever more powerful microscope on the family, assuming that if we couldn't see the influence of parents through standard psychological measures it was because we weren't looking hard enough. Not looking hard enough wasn't the problem. The problem was that psycholo-

gists weren't looking in the right place. They were looking inside the home when they should have been looking outside the home. The answer wasn't parents; it was peers.

Harris argues that we have been in the grip of what she calls the "nurture assumption," a parent-centered bias that has blinded us to what really matters in human development. Consider, she says, the seemingly common-sense statements "Children who are hugged are more likely to be nice" and "Children who are beaten are more likely to be unpleasant." Sure enough, if you study nice, well-adjusted children, it turns out that they generally have well-adjusted and nice parents. But what does this really mean? Since genes account for about half of personality variations among people, it's quite possible that nice children are nice simply because they received nice genes from their parents—and nice parents are going to be nice to their children. Hugging may have made the children happy, and it may have taught them a good way of expressing their affection, but it may not have been what made them nice. Or take the example of smoking. The children of smokers are more than twice as likely to smoke as the children of nonsmokers, so it's natural to conclude

that parents who smoke around their children set an example that their kids follow. In fact, a lot of parents who smoke feel guilty about it for that very reason. But if parents really cause smoking there ought to be elevated rates of smoking among the adopted children of smokers, and there aren't. It turns out that nicotine addiction is heavily influenced by genes, and the reason that so many children of smokers smoke is that they have inherited a genetic susceptibility to tobacco from their parents. David C. Rowe, a professor of family studies at the University of Arizona (whose academic work on the limits of family influence Harris says was critical to her own thinking), has analyzed research into this genetic contribution, and he concludes that it accounts entirely for the elevated levels of cigarette use among the children of smokers. With smoking, as with niceness, what parents *do* seems to be nearly irrelevant.

Harris makes another, subtler point about parents. What if, she asks, the cause-and-effect assumption with niceness and hugging can also go the other way? What if, all other things being equal, nice children tend to be hugged because they are nice, and unpleasant children tend to be beaten because they are un-



pleasant? Children, after all, are born with individual temperaments. Some children are easy to rear from the start and others are difficult, and those innate characteristics, she says, can strongly influence how parents treat them. Harris tells a story about a mother with two young children—a five-year-old girl, named Audrey, and a seven-year-old boy, named Mark—who walked by Harris's house one day when she was out in the front yard with her dog, Page. Page ran toward the children, barking menacingly. Audrey went up to the animal and asked her mother, "Can I pet him?" Her mother quickly told her not to. Mark, meanwhile, was cowering on the other side of the street, and he stayed there even after Harris rushed up and grabbed Page by the collar. "Come on, Mark, the dog won't hurt you," the mother said, and she waited for her son to come back across the street. What is the parenting "style" here that is supposedly so important in shaping personality? This mother is playing two very different roles—coaxing the frightened Mark and reining in the brash Audrey—and in each case her behavior is shaped by the actions and the temperament of her child, and not the other way around.

This phenomenon—what Harris calls child-to-parent effects—has been explored in detail by psychological researchers. David Reiss, of George Washington University, and Robert Plomin, the behavioral geneticist who headed the Colorado study, and a number of colleagues

have just completed a ten-year, nine-million-dollar study of seven hundred and twenty American families. Thirty-two teams of testers were recruited, and they visited each family three times in the course of three years, giving parents and siblings personality tests, videotaping interactions between parents and children, questioning teachers, asking siblings about siblings, asking parents about children, asking children about parents—all to find out whether the differences in how parents relate to each of their children make any predictable difference in the way those children end up. "We thought that this was going to be a straight shot," Reiss told me. "The sibling who got the better microenvironment would do better, be less depressed, be less antisocial. It seemed like a no-brainer." It wasn't. Plomin told me, "If we just ask the simple question 'Does differential parental treatment relate to differences in adolescent adjustment?' the answer is yes—hugely. If you take negative parents—conflict, hostility—it's the strongest predictor of negative adjustment of the siblings." But the study was designed to look at genetic influences as well—to examine whether children had personality traits that were causing parental behavior—and when those genetic factors were taken into consideration the link between negative parenting and problems in adolescence almost entirely disappeared. "The parents' negativity isn't causing the negative adjustment of the kids," Plomin said.

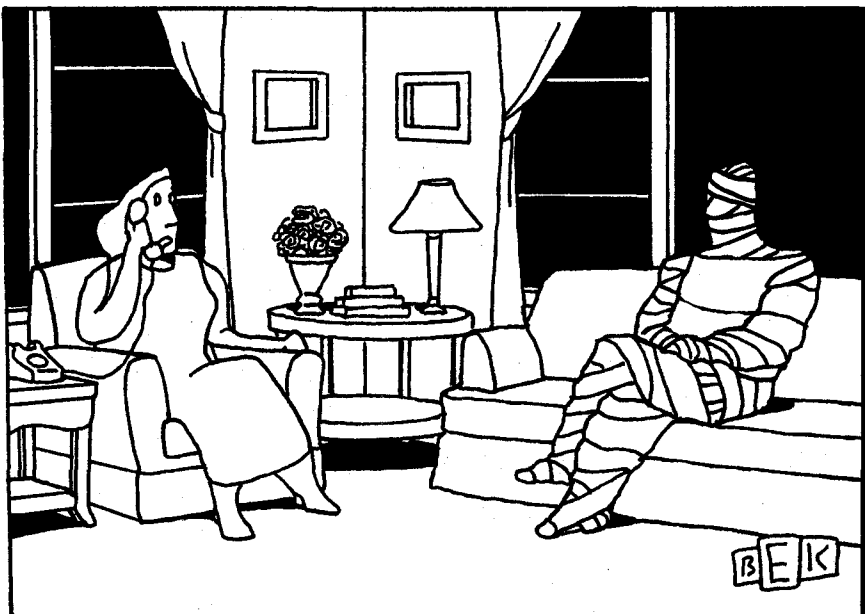
"It's reflecting it. This was a tremendous surprise to us." What looks like nurture is sometimes just nature, and what looks like a cause is sometimes just an effect.

HARRIS takes this argument one step further. Consider, she says, the story of Cinderella:

The folks who gave us this tale ask us to accept the following premises: that Cinderella was able to go to the ball and not be recognized by her stepsisters, that despite years of degradation she was able to charm and hold the attention of a sophisticated guy like the prince, that the prince didn't recognize her when he saw her again in her own home dressed in her workaday clothing, and that he never doubted that Cinderella would be able to fulfill the duties of a princess and, ultimately, of a queen.

If you think of the influence of parents and the home environment as monolithic, this tale does seem impossibly far-fetched. So why does the Cinderella story work? Because, Harris says, all of us understand that it is possible to be one person to our parents and another person to our friends. "Cinderella learned when she was still quite small that it was best to act meek when her stepmother was around, and to look unattractive in order to avoid arousing her jealousy," Harris writes. But outside the house Cinderella learned that she could win friends by being pretty and charming. Harris says that this lesson—that away from our parents we can reconstruct ourselves—is one that all children learn very quickly, and it is an important limitation on the power of parents: even when they do succeed in influencing their children, those influences very often don't travel outside the home.

The Cinderella effect shows up all the time in psychological research. For example, Harris notes that in the August, 1997, issue of the *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine* there is a study showing that the more mothers spanked their kids, the more troublesome the kids became. "When parents use corporal punishment to reduce antisocial behavior," the researchers report, "the long-term effect tends to be the opposite." These findings made headlines across the country. In the same issue of that journal, however, another study of children and corporal punishment reached the opposite conclusion: "For most children claims that spanking teaches aggression seem unfounded." The disparity is baffling until you re-



"Maybe I should have gone with cremation."

member the Cinderella effect. The first study asked mothers to evaluate their children's behavior at home. Not surprisingly, it suggested that repeated spanking contributes to the kind of negative relationship that causes further misbehavior. The second study, however, asked kids how often they got into fights at school, and the world of school is a very different place from the world of home. Just the fact that a child wasn't getting along with his mother didn't necessarily mean that he wouldn't get along with his peers.

In another instance, Harris cites a Swedish study of picky eating among primary-school children. Some kids were picky eaters at school, some were picky at home, but only a small number were picky at home *and* school. A child who pushes away broccoli at the kitchen table might gobble it down in the school cafeteria. In the same way, a child might be shy and retiring at home but a chatterbox in the classroom. Harris applies the same logic to birth-order effects—the popular idea that a good part of our personality is determined by where we stand in relation to our siblings. “At home there are birth order effects, no question about it, and I believe that is why it's so hard to shake people's faith in them,” Harris writes. “If you see people with their parents or their siblings, you do see the differences you expect to see. The oldest does seem more serious, responsible, and bossy. The youngest does behave in a more carefree fashion.” But that's only at home. Studies that look at the way people act outside the home, and away from the parents and siblings, don't see any consistent effects at all. The younger brother cowed by his older siblings all his years of growing up is perfectly capable of being a dominant, take-charge figure when he's among his friends. “Socialization research has demonstrated one thing clearly and irrefutably: a parent's behavior toward a child affects how the child behaves in the presence of the parent or in contexts that are associated with the parent,” Harris concludes. “I have no problem with that—I agree with it. The parent's behavior also affects the way the child *feels* about the parent. When a parent favors one child over another, not only does it cause hard feelings between the children—it also causes the unfavored child to harbor hard feelings against the parent. These feelings can last a lifetime.” But they



LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE

don't necessarily cross over into the life the child leads outside the home—the place where adults spend the majority of their lives.

NOT long ago, Anne-Marie Ambert, a sociologist at York University, in Ontario, asked her students to write short autobiographies describing, among other things, the events in their lives which made them most unhappy. Nine per cent identified something that their parents had done, while more than a third pointed to the way they had been treated by peers. Ambert concluded:

There is far more negative treatment by peers than by parents. . . . In these autobiographies, one reads accounts of students who had been happy and well adjusted, but quite rapidly began deteriorating psychologically, sometimes to the point of becoming physically ill and incompetent in school, after experiences such as being rejected by peers, excluded, talked about, racially discriminated against, laughed at, bullied, sexually harassed, taunted, chased or beaten.

This is Harris's argument in a nutshell: that whatever our parents do to us is overshadowed, in the long run, by what our peers do to us. In “The Nurture Assumption,” Harris pulls together an extraordinary range of studies and observations to support this idea. Here,

for example, is Harris on delinquency. First, she cites a study of juvenile delinquency—vandalism, theft, assault, weapons possession, and so on—among five hundred elementary-school and middle-school boys in Pittsburgh. The study found that African-American boys, many of them from poor, single-parent, “high-risk” families, committed far more delinquent acts than the white kids. That much isn't surprising. But when the researchers divided up the black boys by neighborhood the effect of coming from a putatively high-risk family disappeared. Black kids who didn't live in the poorest, under-class neighborhoods—even if they were from poor, single-parent families—were no more delinquent than their white, mostly middle-class peers. At the same time, Harris cites another large study—one that compared the behavior of poor inner-city kids from intact families to the behavior of those living only with their mothers. You'd assume that a child is always better off in a two-parent home, but the research doesn't bear that out. “Adolescent males in this sample who lived in single-mother households did not differ from youth living in other family constellations in their alcohol and substance use, delinquency, school

dropout, or psychological distress," the study concluded. A child is better off, in other words, living in a troubled family in a good neighborhood than living in a good family in a troubled neighborhood. Peers trump parents.

Other studies have shown that children living without their biological fathers are more likely to drop out of school and, if female, to get pregnant in their teens. But is this because of the absence of a parent, Harris asks, or is it because of some factor that is merely associated with the absence of a parent? Having a stepfather around, for example, doesn't make a kid any less likely to be unemployed, to drop out, or to be a teen-age mother. Nor does having lots of contact with one's biological father after he has left. Nor does having another biological relative—a grandparent, for instance—in the home. Nor does it seem to matter when the father leaves: kids whose parents split up when they were in their early teens are no better off and no worse off than kids whose fathers left when they were infants. And, curiously, children whose fathers die aren't worse off at all. In short, there isn't a lot of evidence that the loss of adult guidance and role models caused by fatherlessness has specific behavioral consequences. So what is it? One obvious factor is income: single mothers have less money than married mothers, and income has a big effect on the welfare of children. If your parents split up and you move from Riverdale to the South Bronx, you're obviously going to be a lot worse off—although it's not the loss of your father that makes the difference. This brings us to another factor: relocation. Single-parent families move more often than intact families, and, according to one major study, those extra changes of residence could account for more than half the increased risk of dropping out, of teen-age pregnancy, and of unemployment among the children of divorce. The problem with divorce, in short, is not so much that it disrupts kids' relationships with their parents as that it disrupts kids' relationships with other kids. "Moving is rough on kids," Harris writes. "Kids who have been moved around a lot—whether or not they have a father—are more likely to be rejected by their peers; they have more behav-

ioral problems and more academic problems than those who have stayed put."

ALL these findings become less perplexing when you accept one of Harris's central observations; namely, that kids aren't interested in becoming copies of their parents. Children want to be good at being children. How, for example, do you persuade a preschooler to eat something new? Not by eating it yourself and hoping that your child follows suit. A preschooler doesn't care what you think. But give the food to a roomful of preschoolers who like it, and it's quite probable that your child will happily follow suit. From the very moment that children first meet other children, they take their cues from them.

One of the researchers whom Harris draws on in her peer discussion is William A. Corsaro, a professor of sociology at Indiana University and a pioneer in the ethnography of early childhood. He was one of the first researchers to spend months crouching by swing sets and next to monkey bars closely observing the speech and play patterns of preschoolers. In one of his many playground stakeouts, Corsaro was sitting next to a sandbox and watching two four-year-old girls, Jenny and Betty, play house, and put sand in pots, cupcake pans, and teapots. Suddenly, a third girl, Debbie, approached. Here is Corsaro's full description of the scene:

After watching for about five minutes [Debbie] circles the sandbox three times and stops again and stands next to me. After a few more minutes of watching, Debbie moves to the sandbox and reaches for a teapot. Jenny takes the pot away from Debbie and mumbles, "No." Debbie backs away and again stands near me, observing the activity of Jenny and Betty. Then she walks over next to Betty, who is filling the cupcake pan with sand.

Debbie watches Betty for just a few seconds, then says, "We're friends, right, Betty?"

Betty, not looking up at Debbie, continues to place sand in the pan and says, "Right."

Debbie now moves alongside Betty, takes a pot and spoon, begins putting sand in the pot, and says, "I'm making coffee."

"I'm making cupcakes," Betty replies.

Betty now turns to Jenny and says, "We're mothers, right, Jenny?"

"Right," says Jenny.

The three "mothers" continue to play together for about twenty more minutes, until the teachers announce cleanup time.

To adults, this exchange looks somewhat troubling. If you saw Debbie cir-

cling the sandbox over and over, you'd think she was shy and timid. And if you came upon the three girls just as Jenny told Debbie no you'd think Jenny was selfish and needed to be taught to share. In both cases, the children seem profoundly antisocial. In fact, Corsaro says, the opposite is true. A preschool playground is rather like a cocktail party. There are lots of informal clusters of kids playing together, and the kids are in constant movement, from cluster to cluster. Unlike at a cocktail party, though, the play clusters are very fragile. "If the phone rang right now," Corsaro said to me when I met him, in his office in Bloomington, "I could answer it, talk for five minutes, and then we could pick up where we left off. It's easy for us. When you are a three- or four-year-old and you've generated something spontaneous and it's going well, it's not so easy." The bell can ring. An adult can step in. An older child can disrupt things. As a result, they spend a lot of effort trying to protect their play from disruption. Betty and Jenny aren't resistant to sharing when they initially say no to Debbie. They are already sharing, and the point of keeping Debbie at bay is to defend that shared play.

What has evolved in preschool culture, then, is what Corsaro calls access strategies—an elaborate set of rules and rituals that govern when and how the third parties circulating through the playground are allowed to join an existing game. Debbie's approach to the sandbox is what Corsaro calls nonverbal entry—the first common opening move in the access dance. She's waiting for an invitation to join. It's the same at an adult cocktail party. You don't come up to an existing conversation and say, "May I join in?" You join the group quietly, as if to demonstrate respect for the existing conversation. When Debbie goes around and around the sandbox, she's trying to understand the basis of Jenny and Betty's play. Corsaro calls this encirclement. Notice that when Debbie initially reaches for a teapot Jenny says no. Debbie hasn't proved that she understands the game in question. So she retreats and observes further. Then she makes what Corsaro calls a verbal reference to affiliation—"We're friends, right?" It's as if she were offering her bona fides. She gets a pos-

itive response. Now she enters again, this time making it absolutely clear that she understands the game: "I'm making coffee." She's in. This is how children learn to get along. Kids teach each other how to be social. Indeed, to the extent that adults might get involved in an access situation—by, for example, instructing Jenny and Betty that they have to share with Debbie—they would frustrate the learning process.

Corsaro is a quiet, bearded man of fifty, with the patient, stubborn air of someone who has spent the better part of his life sitting and watching screaming three-year-olds. Harris E-mailed him when she was writing her *Psychological Review* paper, and the two have struck up an on-line friendship. Most people, Corsaro says, want to figure out what his work says about individual development. Harris, though, recognized at once what Corsaro considers the real lesson, which is the children's immediate and powerful attraction to their own peer group. Once, Corsaro spent close to a year in a preschool where the children had been forbidden to bring their toys into the classroom. Before long, he noticed that they had found a way around the rule: the children were selecting the smallest of their toys—the boys chose Matchbox toy cars, for example, and the girls little plastic animals—and hiding them in their pockets. These were only preschoolers, but already they were organizing against the adult world, defining themselves as a group in opposition to their elders. "What I found interesting was not that the kids wanted to bring their own toys but that when they smuggled them in they never played with them alone. They played with them collectively," Corsaro told me. "They wanted others to know that they had them. They wanted to share the toys with others. They are not only sharing the toy but sharing the fact that they are getting around the rule. This is what is unique. I think there is a real, strong emotional satisfaction in sharing things, in do-

ing things together." Even for a child of three or four, the group is critical.

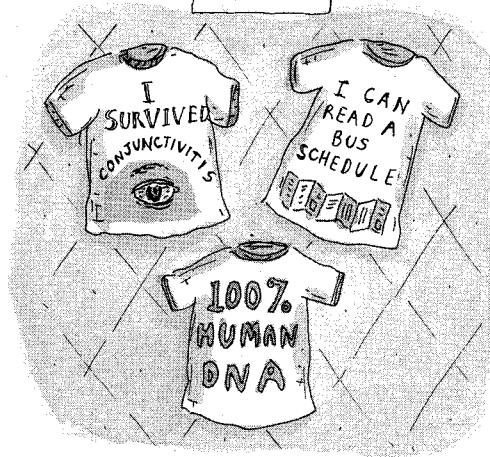
JUDITH HARRIS and her husband, Charles, have two children. The first, Nomi, is their biological daughter, and the second, Elaine, is adopted. In that sense, Harris's own family is a kind of micro-version of the adoption studies that raise the question of parental influence, and she says that without the example of her daughters she might not have reached the conclusion she did. Nomi, the elder, was quiet and self-sufficient as a child, a National Merit Scholar who went on to do graduate work at M.I.T. "She is very much like me and Charlie," Harris says. "She gave us no trouble while she was growing up. She didn't require much guidance, be-

cause she didn't want to do anything that we didn't want her to do. Even before she could walk, she would crawl off to another part of the house, and I'd find her taking things out of a drawer and looking at them carefully—and putting them down carefully."

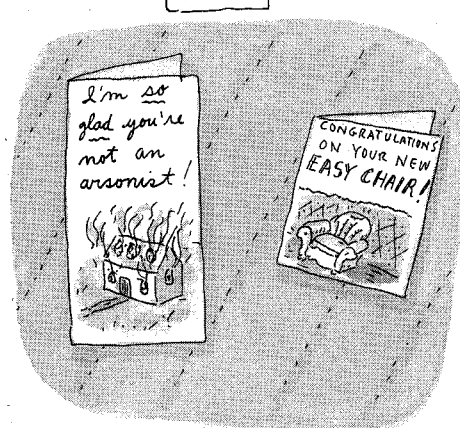
Elaine was different. "When she was little, all you had to do was look down and she was there, right on my heels," Harris recalls. "She always wanted to be with people. We started getting bad reports from the school right away—that she wouldn't sit in her chair, and she was bothering other kids. When Nomi would ask a question, it was because she was interested in the answer. When Elaine would ask a question, it was because she was interested in having the interaction. Nomi would ask a question

GIFTS FROM THE HOUSE OF LOW GOALS

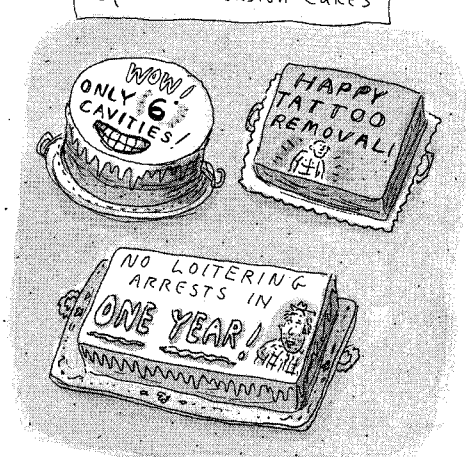
T-Shirts



Cards



Special-Occasion Cakes



Trophies



R. CW

once. Elaine would often ask a question several times. As the girls got older, Nomi became a brain and Elaine became a dropout. Nomi was a member of a very small clique of intellectual kids, and Elaine was a member of the delinquent subgroup. They went in opposite directions."

Harris has an optimistic air about her, as if all her troubles had only served to strengthen her appreciation of life. But it's clear that bringing up Elaine represented a real crisis in her life. When Elaine was six and Nomi was ten, Harris became ill for the first time. She was in such pain that she couldn't sit up for more than half an hour. She tried taking a graduate course in psychology, hoping to finish a doctorate she had started, in the early sixties, at Harvard,

and she had a fellow-student carry a cot to class so she could lie down during lectures. But even that was too hard, so she became a textbook writer, lying in her bed, with a spiral-bound notebook on her knee, and Nomi acting as her typist. She had pneumonia, a heart murmur, pulmonary hypertension, shingles, a year of chronic hives, and a minor stroke. "Sometimes," she says, "I felt like Job," and in the midst of all her troubles her younger daughter seemed out of control.

"We had very bad years with her in her teens," she recalls. "We didn't know how to handle her." Harris says that she began motherhood as a classic environmentalist, meaning she believed that children would reflect the environment in which they were reared. Had she

stopped with Nomi, she says, she might have attributed Nomi's studiousness and self-sufficiency and success to her own enlightened parenting. It was Elaine who made the puzzle posed by the adoption studies seem real. "I assumed that an adopted child would represent her environment, and that if I could give Elaine the same kind of environment I gave to my first child she would turn out—of course, not the same..." She thought for moment. "But I certainly didn't expect that she would be so vastly different. I couldn't see that I was having any effect on her at all." Harris seems a little reluctant to talk about those years, particularly since Elaine turned out, as she puts it, "amazingly well" and is now happy and married, with a toddler and a career as a licensed practical nurse. But it's not hard to imagine the kind of guilt and frustration she must have felt—maternal helplessness magnified by her physical debility—as she and Charles did everything that good parents are supposed to do yet still came up short. Her epiphany was, in a way, her release, because she came to believe that the reason she and Charles couldn't see that they were having any effect on Elaine was that parents really can't have a big effect on their children.

There are a hundred ways of explaining Nomi and Elaine, and there is, of course, something very convenient about the explanation that Harris arrived at: it's the kind of thing that the mother of a difficult child wants to believe. Harris has constructed a theory that lets herself off the hook for her daughter's troubled childhood. It should be said, though, that the idea that parents can control the destiny of their children by doing all the right things—by providing children with every lesson and every experience, by buying them the right toys and saying the right words and never spanking or publicly scolding them—is just as self-serving. At least, Harris's theory calls for neighborhoods, peers, and children themselves to share the blame—and the credit—for how children turn out. The nurture assumption, by contrast, places the blame and the credit squarely on the parent, and has made it possible to demonize all those who fail to measure up to the strictest standards

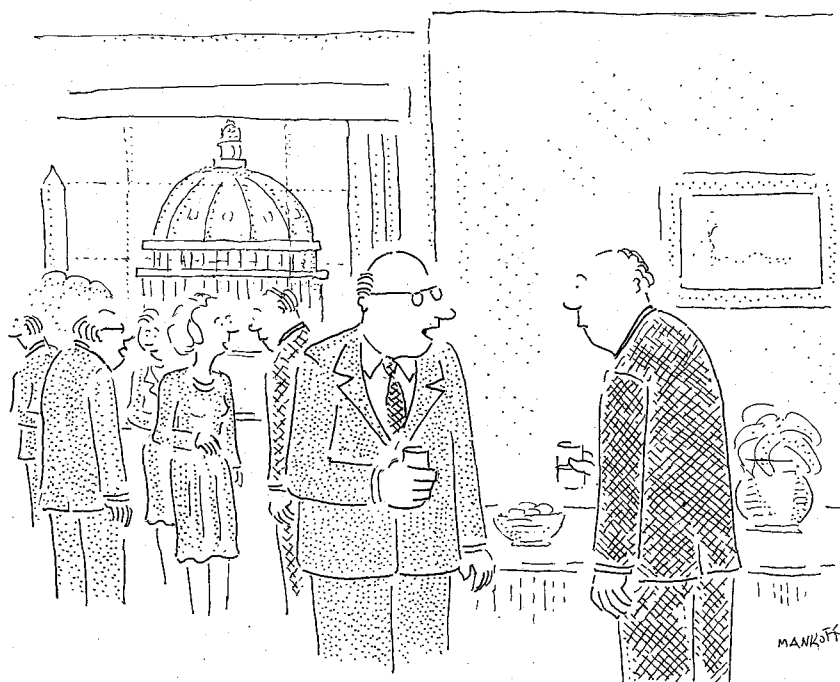


"If you've finished reading the tablets, please pass them back to the front."

of supposedly optimal parenting. "I want to tell parents that it's all right," Harris told me. "A lot of people who should be contributing children to our society, who could be contributing very useful and fine children, are reluctant to do it, or are waiting very long to have children, because they feel that it requires such a huge commitment. If they knew that it was O.K. to have a child and let it be reared by a nanny or put it in a day-care center, or even to send it to a boarding school, maybe they'd believe that it would be O.K. to have a kid. You can have a kid without having to devote your entire life—your entire emotional expenditure—to this child for the next twenty years."

Harris does not see children as delicate vessels and does not believe they are easily damaged by the missteps of their mothers and fathers. We have been told, Harris writes, to tell children not that they've been bad but that what they did was bad, or, even more appropriately, that what they did made us feel bad. In her view, we have come to insist on these niceties only because we have forgotten what the world of children is really like. "Kids are not that fragile," she writes. "They are tougher than you think. They have to be, because the world out there does not handle them with kid gloves. At home, they might hear 'What you did made me feel bad,' but out on the playground it's 'You shithead!'"

Is Harris right? She is the first to admit that what she has provided is only, at this stage, a theory. From her tiny study, off the main hallway of her home in New Jersey, she is scarcely in a position to do the kind of multimillion-dollar, multi-year study that is needed to test her hypothesis. "My guess is that some of the more threatened elders in the field of psychology are going to go out of their way to try and savage this," Robert Sapolsky, a neurobiologist at Stanford, says. "But my gut feeling is that this is really important. Harris makes a lot of sense. Sometimes she is a little doctrinaire"—he paused—"but, boy." Already, Harris has helped wrench psychology away from its single-minded obsession with chronicling and interpreting the tiniest perturbations of family life. The nurture assumption, she says, has turned childhood into parenthood: it has turned the development of children into a story almost entirely about their parents. "Have you ever thought



"Well, my dry cleaner says..."

of yourself as a mirror?" Dorothy Cor-kille Briggs asks in her pop-psychology handbook "Your Child's Self-Esteem." "You are one—a psychological mirror your child uses to build his identity. And his whole life is affected by the conclusions he draws." And here are Barbara Chernofsky and Diane Gage, in "Change Your Child's Behavior by Changing Yours," on how children relate to their parents: "Like living video cameras, children record what they observe." This is the modern-day cult of parenting. It takes as self-evident the idea that the child is oriented, overwhelmingly, toward the parents. But why should that be true? Don't parents, in fact, spend much of their time instructing their children not to act like adults—that they cannot be independent, that they cannot make decisions entirely by themselves, that different rules apply to them because they are children?

"If developmental psychology were an enterprise conducted by children, there is no question that peer relationships would be at the top of the list," Peter Gray, a psychologist at Boston College, told me. "But because it is conducted by adults we tend, egocentrically, to believe that it is the relationship between us and our children that is impor-

tant. But just look at them. Whom do they want to please? Are they wearing the kind of clothing that other kids are wearing or the kind that their parents are wearing? If the other kids are speaking another way, whose language are they going to learn? And, from an evolutionary perspective, whom should they be paying attention to? Their parents—the members of the previous generation—or their peers, who will be their future mates and future collaborators? It would more adaptive for them to be better attuned to the nuances of their peers' behavior. That just makes a lot of sense."

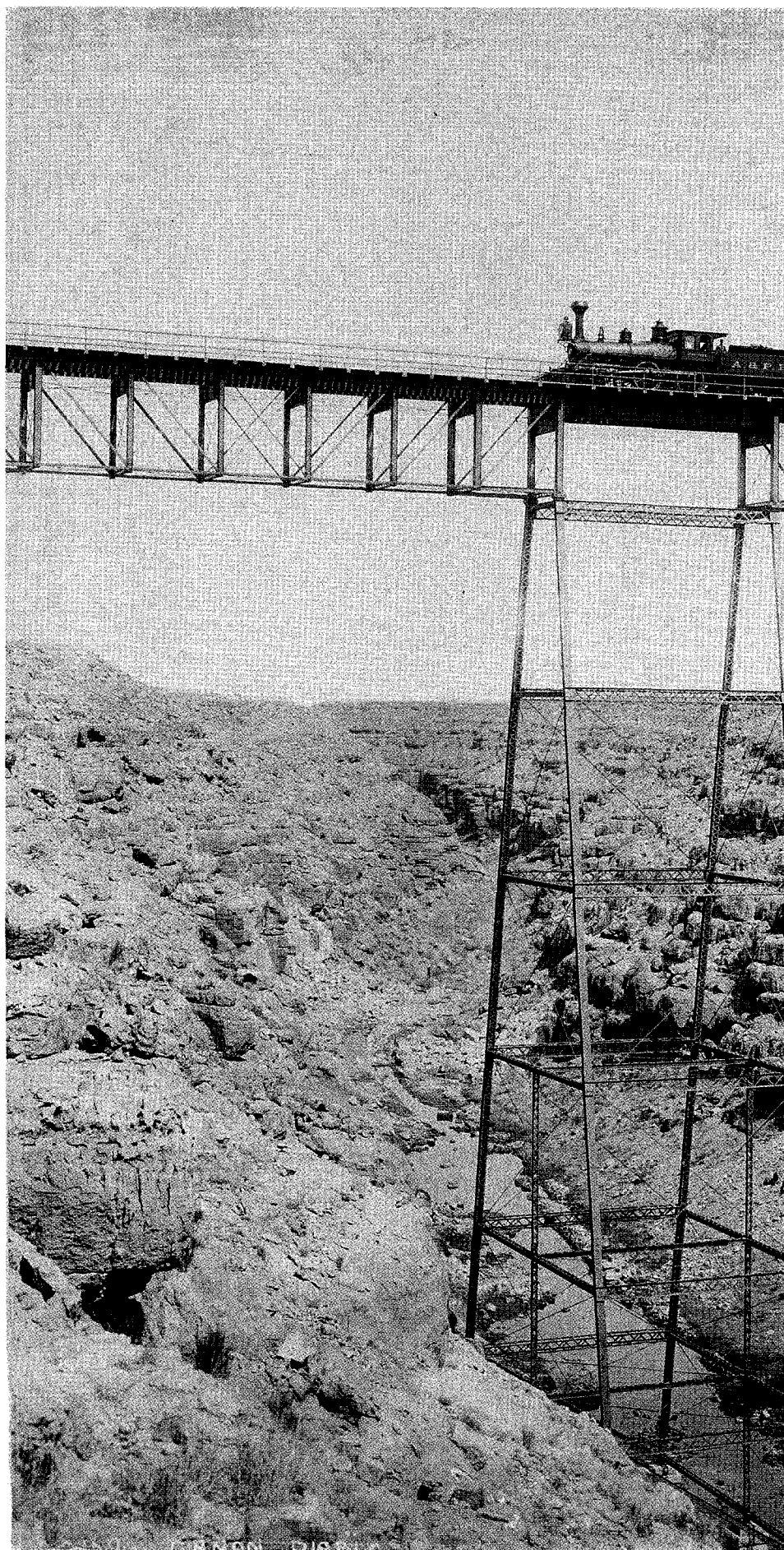
HARRIS's health is more stable now, and when she was putting the finishing touches on her book this summer she was sometimes able to work at the computer twelve, or even fourteen, hours a day. But anything more strenuous is out of the question. The woman who says that what really matters is what happens outside the home rarely leaves the home—not for vacations, or even to see a movie. Indeed, none of the heavyweight psychologists who have befriended her since her *Psychological Review* article ran have ever met her. "Writing E-mail is my recreation," she wrote me in an E-mail.

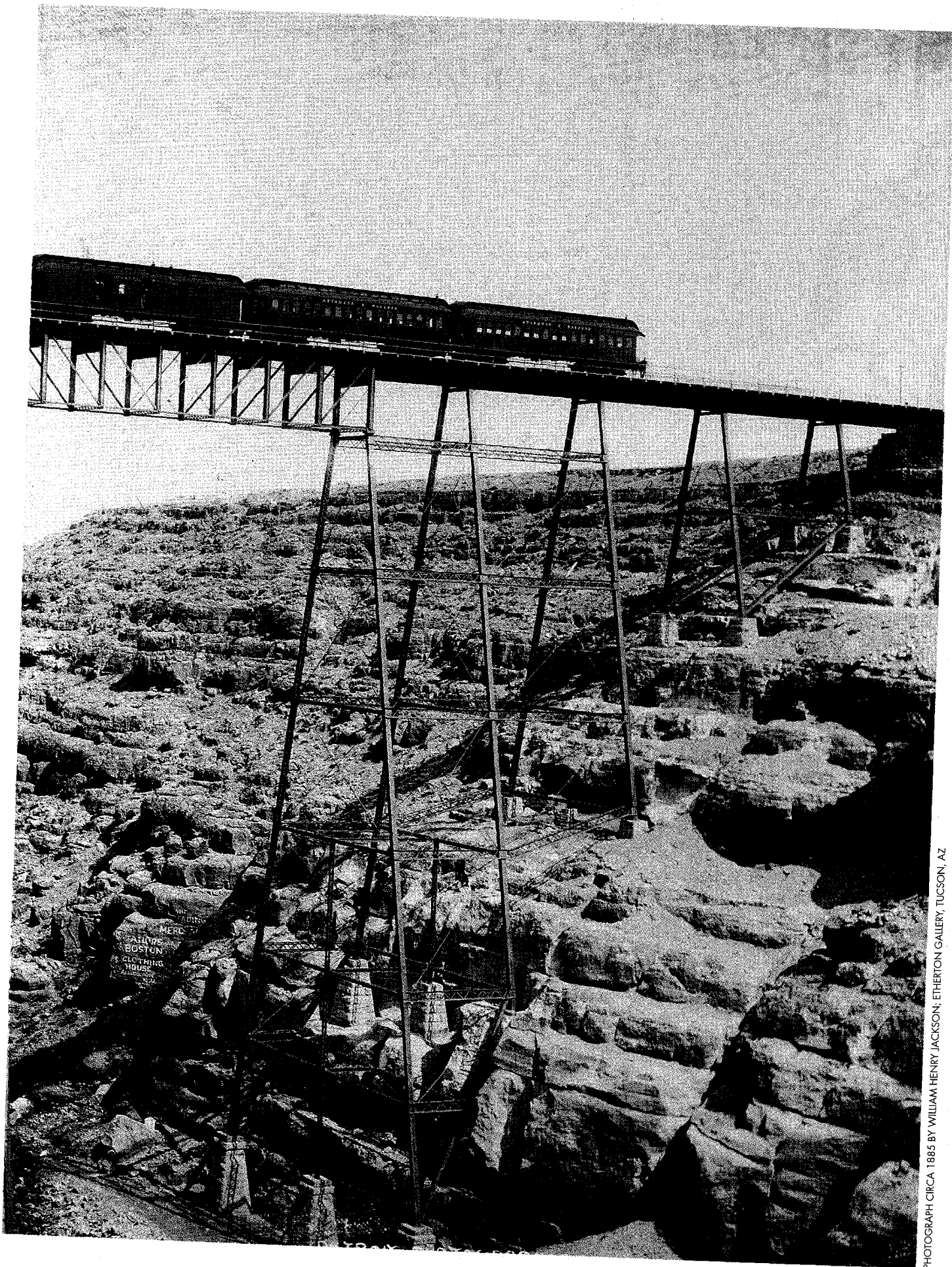
When Harris goes to San Francisco

this week, for the A.P.A. convention, it will be a kind of coming-out party. In preparation, during the past few weeks she has had to go shopping. "I have to buy clothes," she said. "I've hardly been out of the house in years." On August 15th, she will take the stage and receive a prize named in honor of the eminent scholar George A. Miller. Almost four decades ago, Harris was kicked out of graduate school after only two years, and the dean who delivered the news was the same George A. Miller. The two have since corresponded, and Miller has termed the irony "delicious." In her acceptance remarks, Harris told me, she intends to read from the letter that Miller wrote her long ago: "I hesitate to say that you lack originality and independence, because in many areas of life you obviously possess both of those traits in abundance. But for some reason you have not been able to bring them to bear on the kind of problems in psychology to which this department is dedicated. . . . We are in considerable doubt that you will develop into our professional stereotype of what an experimental psychologist should be." ♦

RAISING ARIZONA

Three centuries before a locomotive made its way into the Grand Canyon in the eighteen-eighties, Spanish conquistadores stumbled upon the astonishing landscape and shrugged. To them, as the historian Stephen J. Pyne writes in his new book, "How the Canyon Became Grand," the region had no value—politically, economically, or aesthetically. "It was not a presence so much as an absence, a place to be avoided," Pyne observes. In fact, the Canyon wasn't discovered as a natural wonder until the mid-nineteenth century, when the U.S. War Department sent out a series of expeditions to the Colorado River Basin. In the influential 1882 study "Tertiary History of the Grand Cañon District," the geologist Clarence Dutton described it as "the most sublime of all earthly spectacles"—a monument to America's Manifest Destiny. Today, millions gather on the barren promontories to feel dwarfed by the panorama that Coronado's men once snubbed.





PHOTOGRAPH CIRCA 1885 BY WILLIAM HENRY JACKSON; ETHELTON GALLERY, TUCSON, AZ

wallpaper. But that tiny spot—like any season, or moon, or theatre set; like a cake in a rotary display—invariably spun out of reach and view, and the quarrelling would resume and she would have to wait a long time for the cake to come round again.

Of course their daughter, Mitzy, adored Terence—the hot, lucky fire of him. In Ruth, on the other hand, Mitzy seemed to sense only the chill spirit of a woman getting by. But what was a person in Ruth's position supposed to do, except rebuild herself, from the ground up, as an iceberg? And so in the strange, warm dissolutions that came over her in the May nights silently before sleep, a Pointillist's breaking up of the body and self and of the very room, Ruth began, again, to foresee her own death.

At first, looking at other houses on Sunday afternoons—wandering across other people's floors and carpets, opening closets to look at other people's shoes—gave Ruth a thrill. The tacky photos on the potter's piano. The dean with no doorknobs. The orthodontist with thirty built-in cubbyholes for his thirty tennis shoes. Wallpaper peeling like birch skin. Assorted stained, scuffed floors and misaligned moldings. The Dacron carpets. The trashy magazines on the coffee table. And those Economy Snacks! People had pretzel boxes the size of bookcases. And no bookcases. What would they do with a book? Just put it in the pretzel box!

But soon she backed off. "I could never buy a house that had that magazine on the coffee table," she said once. A kind of fear overtook her. "I don't like that neo-Georgian thing," she said now, before the Realtor, Kit, had even turned off the car's engine, forcing Kit to back out again from the driveway. "I'm sorry, but when I look at it," Ruth added, "my heart just empties right out."

"I care about you, Ruth," said Kit, who was terrified of losing clients and so worked hard to hide the fact that she had the patience of a gnat. "Our motto is 'We Care' and that is just so true: We really, really care, Ruth. We care about you. We care about your feelings and desires. So. Here we are driving along. Driving toward a thing, then driving past. You want a house, Ruth, or shall we just go to the fucking movies?"

Eventually, not even a month later, in Kit's white Cabriolet, the top down,

the wind whipping everyone's hair in an unsightly way, Ruth and Terence took a final tour of the suburbanized cornfields on the periphery of town and found a house. It was the original, ancient four-square farmhouse in the center of a 1979 subdivision. A man-made pond had been dug into the former field that edged the side yard. A wishing well full of wildflowers stood in the front yard.

"This is it," Terence said, gesturing toward the house.

"It is?" said Ruth. She tried to study it with an open mind—its porch and dormers angled as if by a Cubist, its chimney crumbling on one side, its cedar shingles ornately leprous with old green paint. "If one of us kisses it, will it turn into a house?" The ugly white ranches and split-levels lined up on either side at least possessed a geometry she understood.

"It needs a lot of work," admitted Terence. "But this is it. This is our dream house."

"Dream house?" All the dreams she'd been having were about death—its blurry pixillation, its staticky unplugging, its movement through a dark, soft sleep to a hard, bright end.

She squinted again toward the soffits, the Picasso porch, the roof mottled with moss and soot. She studied the geese and the goose poop, moist, mashed cigars of which littered the stony shore of the pond. "Who owns it, again?"

"A Canadian," Kit said. "He's been renting it out. It's a nice neighborhood. Near a nature conservatory and the zoo."

"The zoo?"

Ruth thought about this. They would have to hire a lot of people. It would be like running a company to get this thing back in shape, bossing everybody around, monitoring the loans and payments. She sighed. Such entrepreneurial spirit did not run in her family. She came from a long line of teachers and ministers—employees. Hopeless people. People with faith but no hope. There was not one successful small business anywhere in her genes. "I'm starting to see the whole thing," she said.

DID Ruth really need a project this badly? A diversion? A resurrection? An undertaking? Their daughter, Mitzy, grown and gone—was the whole empty-nest thing such a crisis that they would devote the rest of their days to this mortician's delight? Was it so bad

no longer to have a daughter's frustrated artistic temperament bleeding daily on the carpet of their brains? Mitzy, dear Mitzy, was a dancer. All those ballet and tap lessons as a child—she wasn't supposed to have taken them seriously! They had been intended as middle-class irony and window dressing—you weren't actually supposed to *become* a dancer. But Mitzy had—despite that she was the fattest in the troupe every time, never belonging, rejected from every important company, until one day a young director saw how beautifully, soulfully she danced. Now she travelled the world over and was the darling of the critics. She had become a triumph of feet over heft, spirit over matter, matter over doesn't matter, a figure of immortality, a big fat angel, really. As a result, she now rarely came home. Ruth sometimes got postcards, but Ruth hated postcards—so careless and cheap, especially from this new angel of dance writing to her own sick mother. But that was the way with children.

Once, a while ago, Mitzy had come home, but it was only for two weeks, during Ruth's chemotherapy. Mitzy was, as usual, in a state of crisis. "Sure they like my work," she wailed, as Ruth adjusted that first itchy acrylic wig, the one that used to scare people. "But do they like me?" Mitzy was an only child, so it was natural that her first bout of sibling rivalry would be with her own work. When Ruth suggested as much, Mitzy gave her a withering look and began monopolizing the telephone with moving and travel plans. "You seem to be doing extremely well, Mom," she said, looking over her shoulder, jotting things down. Then she fled.

At the start, Terence, even more than she, seemed enlivened by the prospect of new real estate. The simplest discussion—of doorjambs or gutters—made his blood move around his face and neck like a lava lamp. Roof-shingle samples—rough, grainy squares of sepia, rose, and gray—lit his eyes up like love. He brought home doorknob catalogues and phoned a plasterer or two. After a while, however, she could see him tire and retreat, recoil even—another fling flung. "My God, Terence. Don't quit on me now. This is just like the rollerblades!"

But before Ruth knew it the entire house project—its purchase and renovation—had been turned over to her. First

she had to try to sell their current house. She decided to try something called a fosbo: a "For Sale by Owner." She put ads in papers, bought a sign for the front yard, and worked up a little flyer describing the moldings and light fixtures, all "original to the house." Someone came by to look and sniff. He fingered one of the ripped window shades. "Original to the house?" he said.

With subsequent prospective buyers she abandoned any sales pitch and went for candor. "I admit, this bathroom's got mildew. And look at this stupid little hallway. This is why we're moving! We hate this house." She soon hired back Kit, who banished Ruth from the open house, played Vivaldi on the stereo, and sold the place in two hours.

THE night after they'd closed on both houses, Ruth and Terence stood in their empty new house and ate take-out Chinese straight from the cartons. A lit candle on the floor cast their shadows up on the ceiling, gloomy and fat. Wind rattled the panes, and the boiler in the cellar burst on in small frightening explosions. The radiators hissed and smelled like cats, burning off dust as they heated up. The entire frame of the house groaned and rumbled. There was scampering in the walls. The sound of footsteps—or something like footsteps—thudded softly in the attic, two floors above them.

"We've bought a haunted house," said Ruth. Terence's mouth was full of hot, cabbagey eggroll. "A ghost!" she continued. "Just a little extra protein. Just a little amino-acid bonus." It was what her father had said when he found a small green worm in his bowl of blueberries.

"The house is settling," said Terence.

"It's had a hundred and ten years to settle—you would think it had gotten it done with by now."

"Settling goes on and on," said Terence.

"We would know," said Ruth.

He looked at her, then dug into the container of lo mein.

A scrabbling sound came from the front porch. Terence chewed, swallowed, then walked over to turn the light on, but the light didn't come on. "Was this disclosed?" he shouted. "The light's broken, and it should have been disclosed." He was holding a flashlight with one hand and unscrewing the front light

with the other. Behind the light fixture gleamed three pairs of masked eyes. There was a mound of dark raccoon feces in the crawlspace between the ceiling and the roof.

"What the hell?" shouted Terence, backing away.

"This house is infested!" said Ruth. She put down her food.

"How did those creatures get up there?"

She felt a twinge in her one lung. She had only ever been the lightest of smokers, never in a high-risk category, but now every pinch, prick, tick, or tock in her ribs, every glitch in the material world anywhere, made her want to light up and puff.

"Oh, God, the stench."

"Shouldn't the inspector have found this?"

"Inspectors! Obviously, they're useless. What this place needed was an M.R.I."

AFTER their furniture arrived and was positioned in the house almost exactly the way it had been in their old house, Ruth began to call a lot of people to come measure, inspect, capture, cart away, clean, spray, bring samples, provide estimates and bids, and sometimes they did come, though once people had got a deposit they often disappeared entirely. Machines began to answer instead of humans, and sometimes phone numbers announced themselves disconnected altogether. "We're sorry. The number you have reached . . ."

The windows of the house were huge—dusty but bright because of their size—and because the shade shop had not yet delivered the shades the entire neighborhood of spiffy middle management could peer into Ruth and Terence's bedroom. When she bathed she had to crawl naked out of the bathroom down the hall and into the bedroom and then into the closet to put her clothes on. Or sometimes she just lay there on the bath-

room floor and wriggled into things. It was all so very hard.

In their new back yard crows the size of suitcases cawed and bounced in the branches of a pear tree. Carpenter ants—like shiny pieces of a child's game—swarmed the porch steps. Ruth made even more phone calls, and finally a man with a mottled, bulbous nose and a clean white van with a cockroach painted on it came and doused the ants with poison.

"It looks just like a fire extinguisher, what you're using," said Ruth, watching.

"Ho no, ma'am. Way stronger than that." He wheezed. His nose was as knobby as a pickle. He looked underneath the porch and then back up at Ruth. "There's a whole lot of dying going on in there," he said.

"There's nothing you can do about the crows?" Ruth asked.

"Not me, but you could get a gun and shoot 'em yourself," he said. "It's not legal, but if your house were one hundred yards down that way, it would be. If it were one hundred yards down that way you could bag twenty crows a day. Since you're where you are, within the town limits, you're going to have to do it at night, with a silencer. Catch 'em live in the morning with nets and corn, then at sunset take 'em out behind the garage and put 'em out of your misery."

"Nets?" said Ruth.

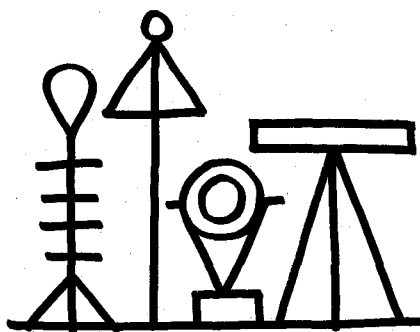
She called many people. She collected more guesstimates and advice. A guy named Noel from a lawn company advised her to forget about the crows, and worry about the squirrels. She should plant her tulips deeper, and with red pepper, so that squirrels wouldn't dig them up. "Look at all these squirrels!" he said, pointing to the garage roof and to all the weedy flower beds. "And how about some ground cover in here, by the porch, some lilies by the well, and some sunflowers in the side yard?"

"Let me think about it," said Ruth.

How could she keep any of it straight? There was spirea and then there was false spirea—she forgot which was which. "Which is the spirea again?" she asked. Noel pointed to the bridal-wreath hedge, which was joyously blooming from left to right, from sun to shade, and in two weeks would sag and brown in the same direction. "Ah, marriage," she said aloud.

"Pardon?" said Noel.

"Are you married?" she asked.



He gave her a tired little smile and said, "No. Kind of have a girlfriend, but no. Not really married."

"That's probably better," said Ruth.

"How about this vegetable garden?" he said brusquely.

"Oh, it's just a lot of grass with a rhubarb in it," said Ruth. "I'd like to dig the whole thing up and plant roses—unless you think it's bad luck to replace food with flowers. Vanity before the Lord, or something."

"It's up to you," he said.

She called him back that night. He personally—no machine—answered the phone. "I've been thinking about the sunflowers," she said.

"Who is this?" he said.

"Ruth. Ruth Aikins."

"Oh, say, Ruth. Ruth! Hi!"

"Hi," she said in a worried way. He sounded as if he'd been drinking.

"Now, what about those sunflowers?" he asked. "I'd like to plant those sunflowers real soon, you know that? Here's why: My girlfriend's talking about leaving me, and I've just been diagnosed with lymphoma. So I'd like to see some sunflowers come up end of August."

"Oh, my God. Life stinks!" cried Ruth. "What kind of girlfriend leaves her beau like that? I mean—good ride. On the other hand, you should make yourself a good cup of tea and sit down and write her a letter. You're going to need someone to care for you through all this. Don't let her call all the shots. Let her understand the implications of her behavior. I know whereof I speak."

Ruth was about to explain further, when Noel cleared his throat hotly. "I don't think it's such a great idea for you to go get personal and advising, Ruth. As a matter of fact, the lymphoma thing I just made up." And with that he hung up.

RUTH put out cages for the squirrels—the squirrels that gnawed the hyacinth bulbs, giving their smooth surfaces runs like stockings, the squirrels that utterly devoured the crocuses. From the back porch she watched each squirrel thrash around in the cage, hurling itself against the bars and rubbing bald spots into its head, before she finally took pity and drove them all to a far-away quarry to set them free. The quarry was a spot that Terence had recommended as "a beautiful seclusion, a rodent Eden, a hillside of oaks above a



"You chant for inner peace. I'm chanting for a development deal."

running brook." Such poetry: probably he'd gotten laid there once—talk about your rodent Eden! In actuality, the place was a depressing little gravel gully, with a trickle of brown water running through it, the kind of place where the squirrel mafia would have dumped their offed squirrels. She lifted the trapdoor and watched each animal scurry off toward the hillside. Would they join their friends or would every last one of them find its way back to the hollow walls of her house and set up shop again?

THE bats—bats!—arrived the following week, one afternoon during a loud, dark thundershower, like a horror movie. They flew back and forth in the stairwells, then hung upside down from the picture-frame molding in the dining room, where they discreetly defecated, leaving clumps of shiny black guano pasted to the wall.

Ruth phoned Carla, who came dashing over with a tennis racket, a butterfly net, and a push broom, all with ribbons tied around their handles. "These are my housewarming presents," she said. "Let me at those sons of bitches."

From her fetal position on the floor,

Ruth looked up at Carla. "What did I ever do to get such a great friend?"

Carla stopped. Her face was flushed with affection, her cheeks blotched with pink. "You think so?" A bat dive-bombed her hair. The old wives' tale—that bats got caught in your hair—seemed truer to Ruth than the new wives' tale: that bats getting caught in your hair was just an old wives' tale.

They buried the whacked bats in tabouli containers, in the side yard.

WITH the crows in mind, Ruth started to go with Carla to the shooting range. The geese, Carla said, were not that big a problem. The geese could be discouraged simply by shaking up the eggs in their nests. Carla was practical. She had a heart the shape of an axe. She brought over a canoe and paddled Ruth out into the cattails to find the goose nests, and there she took each goose egg and shook it furiously. "If you just take and toss the egg," explained Carla, "the damn goose will lay another one. This way you kill the gosling, and the goose never knows. It sits there warming the damn eggnog until the winter comes and then the goose

just leaves, heartbroken, and never comes back. With the crows, however, you have to blow their brains out."

At the shooting range, they paid a man with a green metal money box twenty dollars for an hour of shooting. They each had pistols, Ruth's from the First World War, Carla's from the Second World War, which they had bought in an antique-gun store. "Anyone could shoot birds with a shotgun," Carla had said. "Let's be unique."

"That's never really been a big ambition of mine," said Ruth.

They were the only ones there at the range and stood fifty yards from three brown sacks of hay with red circles painted on them. They fired at the circles—one! two! three!—then turned, squatted, set their guns down, and sipped Cokes. The noise was astonishing, bursting through the fields around them, echoing off the hills and back out of the sky, mocking and retaliatory. She had expected a pistol to seem light and natural—a seamless extension of her angry feral self. Instead, it felt heavy and huge and so unnaturally loud she never wanted to fire such a thing again.

But she did. Mostly she seemed to be firing too high, into the trees behind the targets, perhaps hitting squirrels—perhaps the very squirrels she had caught in her have-a-heart cage, now set free and shot dead with her have-a-

house gun. "It's too much," said Ruth. "I can't possibly be doing this right. It's way too complicated and mean."

TO avoid the chaos of the house entirely, Ruth took to going to matinées. First-run movies, second-run—she didn't care. She was especially stirred by a movie she saw about a beautiful widow who fell in love with a space alien who had assumed human form—the form of the woman's husband! Eventually, however, the space alien had to go back, and an immense and amazing spaceship came to get him, landing in a distant field. To Ruth it seemed so sad and true, just like life: someone assumed the form of the great love of your life only to reveal himself later as an alien who had to get on a spaceship and go back to his planet. Terence had gotten on a spaceship and gone back long ago. Of course, in real life you seldom saw the actual spaceship. Mostly there was just a lot of drinking, mumbling, and some passing out in the family room.

AT home she could not actually net the crows, though their old habitat, the former cornfield that constituted the neighborhood, continued to attract them like an ancestral land or a good life recalled over gin. They hovered in the yards, tormented the cats, and ate the still wet day-old songbirds right out of

their nests. How was she supposed to catch such fiends?

From the vegetable garden now turning flower bed came the persistent oniony smell of chives not yet smothered by the weed barrier. And the rhubarb, too, kept exploding stubbornly through, no matter how she plucked at it, each clutch of stalks paler and more spindly than the last. Perhaps this was a sign of the wrongness of killing food for flowers, Ruth thought again, and her head began to ache.

She began generally not to feel well. Never a temple, her body had gone from being a home to being a house to being a phone booth to being a kite. Nothing about it gave her proper shelter. When she went for a stroll other people in the neighborhood walked briskly past her. The healthy, the feeling well, when they felt that way couldn't remember feeling any other, couldn't imagine it. They were niftily in their bodies. Whereas the sick could only think of being otherwise. They were not in charge. They had lost their place at the top of the food chain. The feeling well were running the show, which was why the world was such a savage place. From her own porch she could hear the P.A. announcements from the zoo. It was a terrible place and a terrible place to live near: the pacing ocelot, the polar bear green with fungus, the zebra demented and hungry and eating the fence, the children brought there to taunt the animals with their own clean place in the world, the vulture sobbing behind his scowl.

ON one particular afternoon that was too cool for spring, when Ruth was sitting inside drinking tea so hot it skinned her tongue, she heard something. Upstairs there was the old pacing in the attic that she had come to ignore. But now there was a knocking on the door—loud, rhythmic, urgent. There were voices outside.

"Yes?" Ruth called, approaching the entryway, then opening the door.

Before her stood a girl, maybe fourteen or fifteen years old. "We heard there was a party here," she said. She had tar-black hair and a silver ring through her upper lip. Her eyes looked meek and lost. "Me and Arianna heard down on State Street that there was a party right here at this house."

"There's not," said Ruth. And then she closed the door, firmly.



"Sir, the tip of the iceberg."

But looking out the window Ruth could see more teen-agers gathering in front of the house. They collected on the lawn like flies on fruit. Some sat on the front steps. Some roared up on mopeds. One carload marched right up the front steps, and without ringing the bell opened the unlocked door and walked in.

Ruth put her tea down on the bookcase and walked toward the front entryway. "Excuse me!" she said, facing the kids in the front hall.

The kids stopped and stared at her. "May I help you?" asked Ruth.

"We're visiting someone who lives here."

"I live here."

"We were invited to a party by a kid who lives here."

"There is no kid who lives here. And there is no party."

A voice suddenly came from behind Ruth. A voice more proprietary, a voice from deeper within the house than even she was. "Yes, there is," it said.

Ruth turned and saw standing in the middle of her living room a fifteen-year-old boy dressed entirely in black, his head shaved spottily, his ears, nose, lips, and eyebrows pierced with multiple gold and copper rings. The rim of his left ear held three bronze clips.

"Who are you?" Ruth asked. Her heart flapped and fluttered, like something hit sloppily by a car.

"I'm Tod."

"Tod?"

"People call me Ed."

"Ed?"

"I live here."

"No, you don't. You don't! What do you mean you live here?"

"I've been living in your attic."

"You have?" Ruth felt sweat burst forth from behind the wings of her nose. "You're our ghost? You've been pacing around upstairs?"

"Yeah, he has," said one of the kids at the door.

"I ran away from home," he said. "I have a key to the house from the old owner. He was a friend. I've been sleeping upstairs in the attic. I thought I heard you say you were going away. I didn't mean for this to be a big party. But I had the key. I thought, I don't know. I thought it would be all right."

"You don't seem to understand," Ruth said. "Big party, little party: you weren't supposed to have a party here at all. Give

me the key. Right now." Then she began to shriek. "Get out of here! Get out of here right now! All of you!"

"But we need someplace to drink, man," said one of the departing boys.

"Go to the damn park!"

"The cops are all over the park," one girl whined.

"Then go to the railroad tracks like we used to do, for God's sake!" she yelled. "Just get the hell out of here." She was shocked by the venom and bourgeois indignation in her own voice. She had, after all, once been a hippie. She had taken a lot of windowpane and preached about the evils of private ownership from a red Orlon blanket on a street corner in Chicago. Life: what an absurd little story it always made.

"Sorry," said Tod. He touched her arm and, swinging a cloth satchel over his shoulder, walked toward the front door with the rest of them.

"Get the hell out of here," she said. "Ed."

THE geese, the crows, the squirrels, the raccoons, the bats, the ants, the kids: Ruth now went to the firing range with Carla as often as she could. She would stand with her feet apart, both hands grasping the gun, then fire. She concentrated, tried to gather bits of strength in her, crumbs to make a loaf. She had been given way too much to cope with in life. Did God have her mixed up with someone else? Get a Job, she shouted silently to God. Get a real Job. I have never been your true and faithful servant. She narrowed her eyes. Mostly she just tried to squint, but then dread closed her eyes entirely. She fired again. Why did she not feel more spirited about this, the way Carla did? Ruth breathed deeply before firing, noting the Amazonian asymmetry of her breath, but in her heart she knew she was a mouse. A mouse bearing firearms, but a mouse nonetheless.

"Maybe I should have an affair," said Carla, firing her pistol into the gunny-sacked hay. "I've been thinking: Maybe you should, too."

Now Ruth fired her own gun, its great storm of sound filling her ears. An affair? The idea of taking her clothes off and being with someone who wasn't a medical specialist just seemed ridiculous. Pointless and terrifying. Why would people do it? "Having an affair is for the young," said Ruth. "It's like

taking drugs or jumping off cliffs. Why would you want to jump off a cliff?"

"Oh," said Carla. "You obviously haven't seen some of the cliffs I've seen."

Ruth sighed. Perhaps, if she knew a man in town who was friendly and attractive, she might—what? What might she do? She felt the opposite of sexy. She felt busy, managerial, thirsty, crazy; everything, when you got right down to it, was the opposite of sexy. If she knew a man in town she would—she would go on a diet for him! Yes, if she knew a man in town, perhaps she would let the excitement of knowing him seize the stem of her brain and energize her days. As long as it was only the stem; as long as the petals were left alone. She needed all her petals.

But she didn't know any men in town. Why didn't she know one?

ON the other side of town, Noel, the gardener, was arguing with his girlfriend, Nitchka, about music.

"So you know nothing at all?" she said. "Not a single song?"

"I don't think so," said Noel. Why was this a problem for her? So what if he didn't know any songs. He had always been willing to let her know more than he did.

"Didn't your parents ever sing songs to you?" she asked. "Can't you even sing one single song by heart? Just any song."

"Like what?"

"If there was a gun to your head, what song would you sing?"

"I don't know!" he shouted and threw a chair across the room.

"Something is deeply missing in you," Nitchka said, and stormed out of the apartment.

A few days later she left for good, hoisting up her CD player and her VCR, then slamming the door behind her, leaving him, he imagined, for some handsome man she'd met at work. "Dumped for Hunks." That was the title of his life. In Heaven, just to spite her, that would be the name of his goddam band.

He drank a lot that week, and on Friday his boss called to fire him. "You think we can run a lawn store this way?" he said.

"If there was a gun to your head," said Noel, "what song would you sing?"

"Get help," said McCarthy. "That's all I have to say."

Noel began to collect unemployment-

ment, to sleep in the days and stay up late at night. He got turned around. He went out at midnight for walks, feeling insomniac and mocked by the dark snore of the neighborhood. Rage circled and built in him like a saxophone solo. He began to venture into other parts of town. Sidewalks appeared, then disappeared again. The moon shone on one side and then on the other. Once he brought duct tape with him, and a ski mask. Another time he brought duct tape, a ski mask, and a gun one of his stepfathers had given him when he was twenty. If you carefully taped a window from the outside, it could be broken quietly: the glass would stick to the tape and cave gently outward.



IN mid-June, Noel chose an old former farmhouse in the middle of a subdivision. It was clearly being renovated—there were ladders and tarps in the yard—and in this careless presentation it seemed an easy target. Music lovers! he thought. They go for renovation. Besides, in an old house there was always one back window that, having warped into a trapezoid, had then been sanded and resanded and could be lifted off the frame like a lid. When he worked for the lawn company he'd worked at many houses like these. Perhaps he'd even been here before, a month ago or so, he wasn't sure. Things looked different at night, and tonight the moon was not as bright as last time, less than full, like the face beneath a low slant hat, like a head scalped at the brow.

"I'm not going to hurt you," he said. He turned on the light in the bedroom. He taped the woman's mouth first, then the man's. He made them get out of bed and stand over by the dresser. "I'm going to take your TV set," said Noel. "And I'm going to take your VCR. But before I do I want you to sing me a song. I'm a music lover, and I want you to sing me one song, any song. By heart. You first," he said to the man. He pressed the gun to his head. "One song." He pulled the duct tape gently off the man's mouth.

"Any song?" repeated the man. He tried to look into the eyeholes of Noel's ski mask, but Noel turned abruptly and

stared at the olive-gray glass of the TV.

"Yeah," said Noel. "Any song."

"O.K." The man began. "Oh, beautiful for spacious skies, for amber waves of grain..." His voice was deep and sure. "For purple mountains' majesty..." Noel turned back and studied the man carefully. How had he learned it all by heart? "You want all the verses?" the

man stopped and asked, a bit too proudly, Noel thought, for someone who had a gun aimed his way.

"Nah, that's enough," Noel said irritably. "Now you," he said to the woman. He pulled the duct tape off her mouth. Her upper lip

was moistly pink, raw from the adhesive. He glanced down at the tape and saw the spiky glisten of little mustache hairs. She began immediately, anxiously, to sing. "You are my lucky star. I saw you from afar. Two lovely eyes at me they were—"

"What kind of song is this?"

She nervously ignored him, kept on. "...gleaming, beaming, I was starstruck." She began to sway a little, move her hands up and down. She cleared her throat and modulated upward, a light, chirpy warble, though her face was stretched wide with fright, like heated wax. "You're all my lucky charms. I'm lucky in your arms." Here her hands fluttered up to her heart.

Noel looked at the couple. "Wait a minute," he interrupted. "I wanna write this one down." And he left them to go into the next room for paper.

"You have a sweet voice," the woman said when he returned. She was standing in front of the nightstand. He was smoothing a creased piece of paper against his chest. "A sweet speaking voice. You must sing well, too."

"Nah, I have a terrible voice," he said. He felt his shirt pocket for a pen.

"No, no. Your voice is sweet. The timbre is sweet. I can hear it." She took a small step sideways. The man, the husband, stayed where he was. He was wearing a big red sweatshirt and no underwear. His penis hung beneath the shirt hem like a long, jewel yam. Ah, marriage. The woman, thrusting her hands into the pockets of her nightgown, took another small step. "It's sweet but with weight."

Outside, Noel thought he could hear some people calling a dog by clapping their hands. "Bravo," said the owner of the dog, or so it sounded. "Bravo."

"Well, thank you," said Noel, his eyes cast downward.

He turned to write down the words and, with the beginning of the tune edging into his head, something exploded in the room. Everything went quiet. Music, he saw now, led you steadily into silence. You followed the thread of a song into a sudden sort of sleep. The white paper leaped up in a blinding flash, hot and sharp. The dresser edge caught his cheekbone in a gash, and he seemed no longer to be standing. His shoes slid along the rug. His hands reached up, then down again, then up along the dresser knobs, then flung themselves through the air and back against the floor. His brow, enclosing then devouring his sight, finally settled dankly against his own sleeve.

Heat drained from his head, like a stone.

THERE was no echo after the explosion. It was not like at the range. There had been just a click and a vibrating snap that had flown out before her toward the mask, and then the room roared and went silent, giving back nothing at all.

Terence gasped. "Good God," he said. "I suppose this is just what you've always wanted: a dead man on your bedroom floor."

"What do you mean by that? How can you say such a heartless thing?" Shouldn't her voice have had a quaver in it? Instead it sounded flat and dry.

"Did you have to be such a good shot?" Terence asked. He began to pace.

"I've been practicing," she said. Something immunological surged in her briefly, like wine. For a minute she felt restored and safe—safer than she had in years. How dare anyone come into her bedroom! How much was she expected to take? But then it all left her, wickedly, and she could again feel only her own abandonment and disease. She turned away from Terence and started to cry. "Oh, God, let me die," she finally said. "I am just so tired." Though she could hardly see, she knelt down next to the masked man and pressed his long, strange hands to her own small ones. They were not yet cold—no colder than her own. She thought she could feel herself begin to depart with him, the two of them rising together, translucent as jellyfish, leaving through the air, floating out into a night sky of singing and release,

flying until they reached a bright, bright spaceship—a great set of fiery teeth—and, absorbed into the larger light, were taken aboard for home. “And what on earth was all that?” she imagined she heard them both say merrily of their lives, as if their lives were now just odd, noisy, and distant, as in fact they were.

She could hear the police car pulling up. “What have we here?” she heard someone say.

“Look for yourself, I guess,” said someone else.

She touched the man's black knit mask. It was pilled with gray, like dotted swiss, and askew, misaligned at the eyes—the soft turkey-white of a cheekbone where the eye should be—and it was drenched with maroon. She could peel it off to see his face, see who he was, but she didn't dare. She tried to straighten the fabric, tried to find the eyes, then pulled it tightly down and turned away, wiping her hands on her nightgown. Without looking, she patted the dead man's arm. Then she turned and started out of the room. She went down the stairs and ran from the house.

She was ill again. She knew. The cancer, dismantling as it came, had begun its way back. She felt its poison, its tentacular reach and clutch, as a puppet feels a hand.

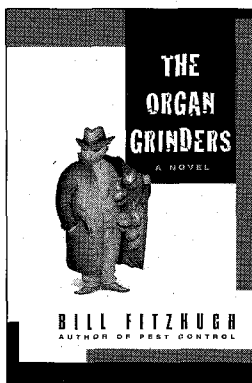
Mitzy, my baby, she said in the dark, running across the lawn. Baby, come home.

Though she would have preferred long ago to have died, fled, gotten it all over with, the body—Jesus, how the body!—took its time. It possessed its own wishes and nostalgias. You could not just turn neatly into light and slip out the window. No matter how you wanted to, you couldn't go like that. Within one's own departing but stubborn flesh there was only the long, sentimental, piecemeal farewell. The body, hauling sadnesses, pursued the soul, hobbled after. The body was like a sweet dim dog trotting lamely toward the gate as you tried slowly to drive off, out the long driveway. Take me, take me, too, barked the dog. Don't go, don't go, it said, running along the fence, almost keeping pace but not quite, its reflection a shrinking charm in the car mirrors, as you trundled past the viburnum, past the pine grove, past the property line, past every last patch of land, straight down the swallowing road, disappearing and disappearing. Until at last it was true: you had disappeared. ♦

(Advt.)

Today it seems almost anything is technologically possible. But there is a dark side to progress, and every scientific breakthrough is born with the potential for abuse.

Bill Fitzhugh chooses to view the situation from a humorous perspective.



Having earned kudos for his comic thriller *Pest Control*, he now trains his keen satirical eye on the merging of medical science and big business.

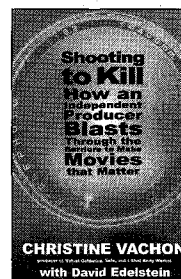
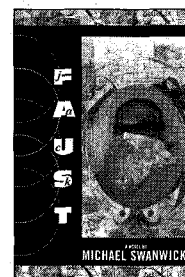
Fitzhugh's latest novel, **THE ORGAN GRINDERS**, concerns a well-meaning environmentalist named Paul Symon who gets caught up in an ailing venture capitalist's brazen scheme to encourage the breeding of genetically altered baboons for cross-species organ transplantation. Important concerns about god-playing and animal rights are indeed addressed here, but it is done so in a manner more designed to induce serious laughter than intense moral outrage—which proves that provocative thought and unabashed entertainment can go hand-in-hand.

Technology runs rampant in **Michael Swanwick's JACK FAUST**—a radical new take on the Goethe classic—and it does so centuries before its rightful time. The author's disillusioned medieval scholar sells his soul, metaphorically, for hitherto undreamed-of knowledge—microbiology, aerodynamics, atomic fusion, etc.—and he uses it to plunge Europe into a premature Age of Industrialization with catastrophic results. Swanwick has reinvented the past and, by doing so, he offers readers a sobering glimpse into humanity's all-too-possible future.

In an era of ultra-high-tech, hundred-million-dollar Hollywood blockbusters, producer **Christine Vachon** makes quality independent films on a shoestring. And she tells us how in **SHOOTING TO KILL**. With intelligence, insight, and savage wit, the driving force behind the daring and controversial “Kids,” “I Shot Andy Warhol,” and “Velvet Goldmine” takes us behind the scenes to demystify the process of developing, shooting, and marketing a low-budget movie—a unique art form which Vachon herself calls “a crisis waiting to happen.”

We'll talk again.

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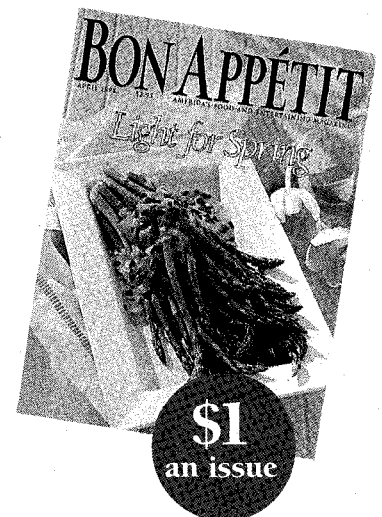
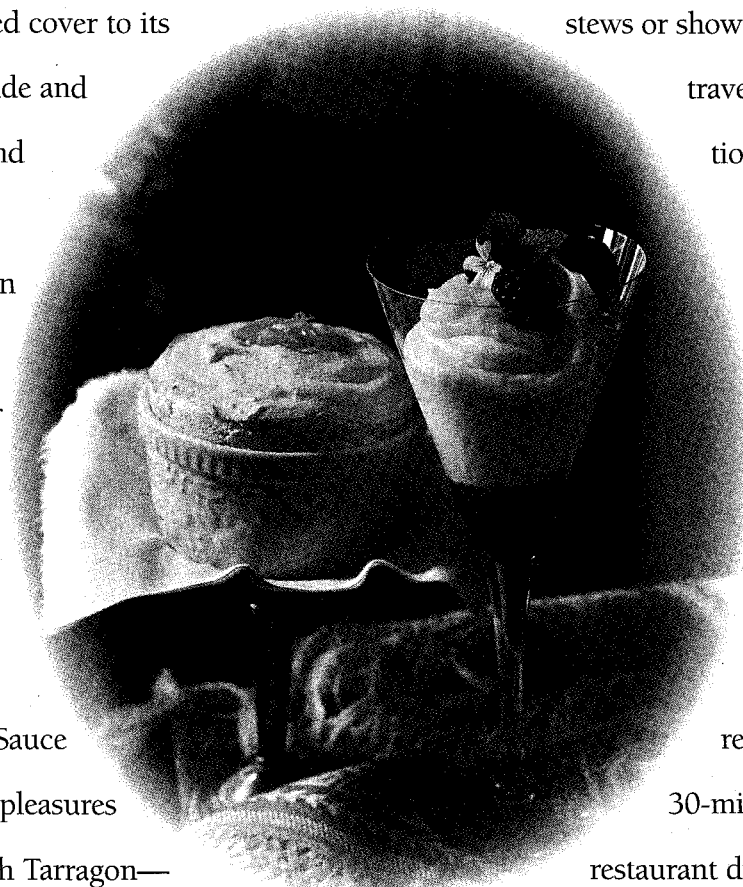
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THE PRANKSTER AND THE PROPHET

A new translation of Gogol's work magnifies his contradictions.

BY JAMES WOOD

NIKOLAI GOGOL is a cosmic fidget. He does not let the eye of eternity fix him whole. Is he a realist or a fantasist? A martyr or a trickster? There is Gogol the earnest Christian, who argues, in an essay written in 1836, that literature should provide moral guidance—that it should show both “the ridiculous side of customs and vices and the highly touching qualities of human virtues and lofty sentiments.” At such moments, he appears to see literature as a kind of holy owl, ready to pounce on the verminous and then fly up into the heavenly heights. This is the Gogol who, always didactic, becomes insufferably sermonic in his late thirties as his orthodox Christianity begins to devour him. Under the sway of a sinister priest, Father Konstantinovsky, this Gogol renounces literature and food, incinerates most of the second part of his great novel, “Dead Souls,” and, in 1852, starves himself to death.

But there is also the satirist who is always falling over in laughter, the inspired comic who is far more at home with fools than with holy fools: despite his own pronouncements about literature’s moral task, he seems essentially incapable of creating saintly, decent, or just ordinary characters. He is a monopolist of the negative; the Good remains tongue-tied in his fiction. Even the occasional flurries of Russian nationalism and sacred lecturing seem ironically inflected. This rich confusion about the “true” Gogol has made him a critical war zone since the eighteen-thirties, with various political and literary factions advancing and retreating, and that battle has now been

joined by Richard Pevear, in his introduction to a superb new translation he and Larissa Volokhonsky have made of the “Collected Tales” (Pantheon; \$30).

Gogol was born in Ukraine in 1809. His family had never quite been gentry,



Though Gogol is seen now as a postmodern fantasist, his contemporaries knew him as a stubborn realist.

and, in the seventeen-sixties, when a new law threatened to deprive all non-gentry of their land and holdings, Gogol’s grandfather falsified family documents to give the Gogols a quick promotion. The stripes and insignia of social rank would be Gogol’s constant preoccupation as a writer. He arrived in St. Petersburg at the age of nineteen, determined to thrive, and was immedi-

ately unhappy. His early stories (some of which appear in the first section of the “Collected Tales”) were written there, and they capitalized on a vogue for his exotic and romantic homeland. They are full of patriotic songs, foolish bravery, and Ukrainian food. Most are nostalgic and ultimately comforting—oatmeal for the moping émigré. In several, the Devil makes a supernatural raid on events, and is repulsed with the help of Christ. But though these writings may seem little more than recreational, they made Gogol famous in his early twenties, and gained him a reputation as a somewhat fluorescent historian of Ukrainian nationalism.

Eager to make something of this celebrity, Gogol insinuated himself into a professorship. Despite having no university degree, he was appointed, in 1834, professor of world history at St. Petersburg University. Few could fill this Hegelian sedan; Gogol quickly slipped out of it. His strong instinct for idealism and moralistic pedagogy had at first impelled him to seek students—to acquire a platform from which he might reform Russia’s youth and preach goodness and wholesome nationalism—but it wasn’t long before Gogol the prankster emerged. His first few lectures were well received but were intellectually impressionistic. Then he simply stopped attending his own lectures, or he showed up with a bandaged chin, apparently gagged by toothache. Since he believed that geography should be taught without the distraction of accurate maps, and that historical dates were portable, his yearlong tenure seems itself a triumph of elasticity.

Like his characters, Gogol was a defensive fantasist—an actor, a fabricator, a peacock, a salesman of treasures. He threw lies around himself like hoops, and danced within them. Friends reported that he was amusing to travel with, because he had a great dislike of showing his passport or giving his name. He liked aliases (“Gogel,” “Gonel,” and so on). He irritated some people by playing card games he had invented and changing the rules during play. He became rather selfishly

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preoccupied with undercooked macaroni and cheese, a dish he made again and again for guests. He dressed delicately, sometimes wearing a tall, yeasty, poetical hat; in his fiction he always notes clothes with jubilation. In one story, a woman has "a pale yellow hat as light as a pastry"; in another, the sleeves of a woman's dress are seen surreally as resembling "two airborne balloons, so that the lady would suddenly rise into the air if that man were not holding her."

Fittingly for someone whose fiction is a sky of airborne objects and airy aspirations, Gogol himself seems to float upward, out of reach. Biography does not yield an explanation, for example, of why Gogol, having established his playful reputation, left St. Petersburg in 1835 and began the solemn, wandering reclusion (in Baden-Baden, Paris, Rome, Jerusalem) that lasted the rest of his life; nor does it explain why his bold sense of comedy curdled into the religious hec-toring of his later years.

He wrote much of "Dead Souls" in Rome in the late eighteen-thirties, before the full onset of his mania. By 1841, a year before its publication, he was already in something of a religious teeter. He hinted, in letters, at his potential involvement in Christ's Second Coming. He wrote to one friend, in the Biblical Russian he now used for such communications, "But harken to my words, you must harken to my words now, for my words are doubly powerful over you, and woe unto whosoever does not harken to my words!" Two years after the publication of "Dead Souls," he infuriated the writer Sergei Aksakov by ordering him to read a chapter a day of Thomas à Kempis's "Imitation of Christ," preferably in the evening. (Aksakov replied that he had read Thomas à Kempis before Gogol was born.) Luckily, most of "Dead Souls" seems to have been written in something of a profane lull.

Sometimes it is difficult to determine where Gogol the writer left off and Gogol the fanatic began. He had originally intended "Dead Souls" to be a moral armada of three volumes based on Dante's "Divine Comedy"; we are told that he subsequently destroyed the second part because he believed that fiction was an unworthy activity for a saint. But is it possible that the writer, who had devoted more than ten years to this manuscript,

recognized that a fiction of religious exhortation hardly qualified as fiction at all, and so was not worth having?

GOGOL's best works are unsolemn and speedy. They are also a reminder that fiction may at times be happily entrepreneurial. Frequently Gogol has a single flashing idea, and hotly syndicates it in scene after scene. In "The Nose," a man wakes up to find that he has lost his nose, and spends several anguished days searching for it and then trying to reattach it. In "The Diary of a Madman," a man thinks that he is the King of Spain. Gogol's play "The Inspector General"—like "Dead Souls"—expands, in picaresque fashion, from a single hoax, when an opportunist arrives in town posing as a government official.

At the same time, Gogol's antic fictions are streaked with a hysterical didacticism. "Dead Souls" bursts into an occasional hymn to Mother Russia. "The Overcoat" includes this lachrymose observation on the part of its hero, the poor, solitary clerk: "Many a time in his life he shuddered to see how much inhumanity there is in man, how much savage coarseness is concealed in refined, cultivated manners." And yet at these moments Gogol seems to parody his own solemnity. What kind of truth, then, does he tell? Does he depict an actual Russia of slothful landowners and pluming noblemen? Or is he a dark surrealist, closer to Kafka or Mayakovsky?

In fact, most of Gogol's contemporaries considered him a radical realist, who simply transcribed into his fictions the raw material supplied by his nation and his countrymen. In his work they found a relentlessly accurate analysis of corrupt bureaucracy, of the evil of serfdom, of the bitterness of poverty. "The Overcoat" was seen as a great, humane argument on behalf of "the little man." In "Dead Souls," it was thought, Gogol showed the final corruption of the indefensible, and tenuously persistent, institution of serfdom. (The serfs were emancipated nine years after his death.) The essayist Alexander Herzen praised the novel as "a practical course for studying Russia," and the critic Vissarion Belinsky was so concerned to emphasize the novel's realism that he claimed, absurdly, that it didn't have a funny word in it.

Gogol's intentions were seriously re-examined only in the first decades of this

century, by writers who claimed him to be a proto-modernist, a surrealist, a linguistic game player, whose structures were not parented by real life. But this revisionism was itself erased by official Soviet doctrine, which enshrined a version of nineteenth-century radical opinion: Gogol was a realist, a critic of tsarist iniquities. The Soviet reading, like that of his contemporaries a century earlier, stripped Gogol of his comedy and his surrealism.

Richard Pevear joins the fray in his introduction to the "Collected Tales." In his view, and that of most contemporary scholars, Gogol is a deconstructionist *avant la lettre*, a writer so enamored of the riddling word that he shows reality to be nothing more than a set of verbal fictions: the world disappears into the "airy nothing" of the word; Gogol's thousand-eyed sentences are about nothing but themselves; his fiction is that of a subtle solipsist. The St. Petersburg of these tales is less the actual historical city than it is "a closed fiction," Pevear writes, and Gogol's tales reveal social rank to be "an instance of the groundlessness of reality itself."

And yet Pevear's Gogol is merely the absurd negative of Herzen's Gogol. In ridding Gogol's work of extrinsic political messages, we do not have to rid it of intrinsic human communication. The Soviet tyranny has made it almost impossible to discuss Gogol as a realist—as if this category of thought were a room in which such horrible events had occurred that it couldn't be reentered. But realism is a wonderfully encompassing thing. It produces surrealism; it schools its own truants. Gogol's peculiar achievement is to have reinvented realism; he is both an inflamed naturalist and a precise fantasist.

CONSIDER Gogol's almost Austenesque interest in social rank. His stories abound in snobs and sycophants. "The Diary of a Madman" is touching partly because the madman, in his paranoia and insanity, dreams of something that perfectly sane people also dream of: social promotion. "What makes me a titular councillor, and why on earth am I a titular councillor? Maybe I'm some sort of count or general and only seem to be a titular councillor?" That this man believes himself to be the King of Spain, and the local barber to be spreading Muhammadanism throughout the world, does not deprive his dreaming of its social reality. Indeed, in this tale Gogol re-

veals paranoia to be a kind of society sickness—a form of gossip imagined by a gossip and turned against him.

Likewise, "The Nose," whose chilly playfulness anticipates "The Metamorphosis," remains firmly enmeshed in society. Gogol suggests that its protagonist, Kovalev, who wakes up one morning without his nose, may be the victim of a rather ordinary mishap. Kovalev has a barber who habitually steadies his client's head by holding his nose while giving him his daily shave; perhaps it is the barber's theft. Kovalev is socially anxious. He has been a collegiate assessor for only two years, "and therefore could not forget it for a moment." Covering his smoothed face with a handkerchief, he runs outside in search of his nose. Suddenly, he catches sight of it. His nose has turned into a man—a state councillor, to judge by his uniform, several ranks above Kovalev's own rank. He follows his nose into a cathedral, and accosts him. But the state councillor is snobbish and tells Kovalev that he should know his place. He refuses to speak further to Kovalev. Kovalev weeps. We realize, suddenly, that Kovalev's nose does not "know its place" and has got above itself—literally. Thus, in a strange and beautiful way, Gogol's story is not at all anti-realistic. Quite the opposite: it is a dogged literalization of a fantastic social reality. It takes seriously the idea that Kovalev's nose is socially ambitious—that Kovalev has been looking down his nose at other people, has had his nose in the air.

But "The Nose" does not rest here. In the cathedral Kovalev has a tiny jolt—thrown off casually by Gogol, in one of those humane whispers that crowd his work. Kovalev, his handkerchief still to his face, sees some old peasant women "with bandaged faces and two openings for the eyes, at whom he had laughed so much before." The bandaged Kovalev realizes his kinship with the bandaged peasants. He surely realizes at this moment that, despite the fantastic loss of his nose, reality is not mad, or "groundless," but painfully real.

And, because reality exists so fiercely for Gogol's characters, they, in turn, exist fiercely for us. His people are fantasists, but it is the awful world that has made them so. Perhaps the loveliest moment in his writing occurs in "The Overcoat," when Akaky Akakievich, the poor unmarried clerk, decides that he will buy a

BRIEFLY NOTED

THE WAY I FOUND HER, by Rose Tremain (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; \$25). Thirteen-year-old Lewis Little—dog-lover, chess player, amateur detective—joins his mother on a summer translating job in Paris to see the city and improve his French. But when he meets their glamorous hostess, Valentina Gavrilovich, with her infectious laugh, her cerise lipstick, and her large white breasts, his life is changed forever. And when Valentina vanishes he dedicates himself, like a knight from one of the medieval romances she writes, to rescuing her. Lewis's own narrative of innocence and experience is curiously reminiscent of the nineteen-fifties, and the effect is one of pleasurable nostalgia.

THE ANSWER IS YES, by Sara Lewis (Harcourt Brace; \$23). At the Institute of Affirmation, every answer is "Yes." When Jenny Brown—bored, befuddled, and at an impasse in her marriage to a science-wiz husband—stumbles into an acting class there, she finds herself directing, with miraculous aplomb, "Spoon River Anthology." This upbeat and disarming novel dissembles like a game of Twenty Questions: by the time Jenny, an adoptee, figures out whether she's animal, vegetable, or mineral, she's become the answer she's been looking for.

ACHESON, by James Chace (Simon & Schuster; \$30). Dean Acheson was Truman's Secretary of State from 1949 to 1953, and today's world, as Chace shows in this lucid biography, was shaped in no small degree by his efforts. With his Eastern-establishment roots (Groton, Yale) and his Anglophilic views, Acheson was the perfect whipping boy for Republican red-baiters who accused him of "losing" China and bungling the Korean conflict. But he faced down his accusers with intelligence and grit, and constructed out of the ruins of the Second World War a set of alliances designed to protect Western Europe and Japan from Soviet expansionism.

THE HAND, by Frank R. Wilson (Pantheon; \$30). The author, a neurologist, explores anatomy, anthropology, and evolution to show how the hand shapes human language and thought. He argues convincingly that a less rigid, more individualized approach to education will yield a student with a unified body and mind. His most inspiring evidence is blessedly anecdotal: interviews with people whose vocations involve the skilled use of their hands, among them a master marionettist who has learned to "be in the puppet," a virtuoso backhoe operator, and a surgeon who is also a magician.

THE LETTERS OF DOROTHY L. SAYERS, VOL. II, edited by Barbara Reynolds (St. Martin's; \$27.95). Lord Peter Wimsey makes himself scarce during the war years, while Sayers turns her fierce powers of attention to writing stage and radio plays and, often through them, expounding matters of Christian theology and dogma. She went from strength to strength, and it's fascinating to see how, in each of her incarnations, Sayers was engrossed by the rigorous requirements of mystery.

fine new coat. He decides to save. Gogol tells us that even the idea of the coat consoles him: "From then on it was as if his very existence became somehow fuller, as if he were married."

BUT it is that grave frolic "Dead Souls" that most forcefully repudiates the postmodern banishment of the actual. Gogol's masterpiece is allegorically layered: it is a parody of the picaresque novel, in which a traveller, catapulted by a sling of episodes, is in welcome motion; it is also, in some respects, a parody of the novel of social advancement, for in buying dead serfs its devil-hero Chichikov is acquiring property, making himself a man of means—a man for whom the ends are the means, and justify any means. "Dead Souls" is also an allegory of orthodox Christianity: a novel that tells us—though always obliquely, rather than pedantically (as it would have done had the other volumes been written)—that the soul is not burst by death's sting but flies out of the Devil's grasp.

If, in Gogol's early stories, the Devil is just a dirty ghost—frankly supernatural, and only intermittently present—Chichikov really is the Devil made flesh. He is as professional as an accountant. He arrives in a small town, quickly ingratiates himself with the town's notables, and embarks on his plan. It was common for landowners to buy serfs from each other. Moderate prosperity might mean the possession of two hundred serfs (Gogol's father owned this number), of whom a few would probably have recently died. Chichikov proposes to several landowners that he buy these dead names at a bargain rate. The dead serfs are still named on each owner's list as if they were alive, because a new census has not yet erased them, and the owner will have to pay taxes on those names. In selling the names to Chichikov, the owners are relieved of a tax burden; in buying them, Chichikov acquires credentials as a gentleman and property owner, which he will use to secure a mortgage.

But Chichikov is not really interested in social advancement, and Gogol quickly makes this clear. No, Chichikov's motives are an abyss, and the reader's logical inference is that he is Satan, come to acquire men's souls for the army of death. Life, however, intrudes, and gloriously. One of Chichikov's interlocutors realizes his game and threatens to have him beaten. Another suggests that Chichikov

is not offering enough for the serfs' names. After all, he says, no one was a better mason than Milushkin, and Mikhcheev was the finest carriage-builder imaginable, and Stepan was a remarkable carpenter. Chichikov should pay better money for these men. But they are dead, Chichikov complains, and Gogol plays out the ironies of a scene in which a Russian landowner who never cared much for his serfs when they were alive becomes protective in their behalf only when they are dead.

Yet they are not dead. They live in their names. When Chichikov peruses the lists, he is struck by the nicknames of the dead: John-the-Wheel, No-Respect-for-the-Pig-Trough, Grigorii Try-to-get-there-but-you-won't. Even on paper they signify something. And as Chichikov studies his new possessions they rise off the paper and wave their lives before his eyes. Chichikov cannot help imagining the carpenter and the carriage-maker, their appetites and their tardiness, their drunkenness and their labors: "It seemed as if these muzhiks had been alive only yesterday. As he gazed long at the names, Chichikov's spirit was touched and, with a sigh, he uttered: 'Good heavens, how many of you are crowded in here!'" Once the dead rise again—once life stirs and reasserts itself—we know that Chichikov the Devil is doomed. He has learned Kovalev's lesson—that we are all bandaged in reality. In religious terms, the Devil has been slain by the Word, for these serfs are only words on a scrap of paper, yet how the words smoke! In this novel, miraculously, the two sides of Gogol's personality are briefly reconciled: the flying satirist, with his wild imagery, and the Christian moralist, who locates his redemptive powers in the very Host of his own mischievous prose.

In 1835, travelling from the Crimea to Moscow, Gogol and a friend, Pashchenko, played a trick that Gogol had read about in Pushkin. Gogol sent Pashchenko on ahead of him to announce in the next town the imminence of a government inspector, who was travelling incognito. Both men were, of course, given royal passage. This was the seed of Gogol's 1836 play "The Inspector General." The postmodernist might remark that Gogol took a literary tale from Pushkin, acted it out, and then returned it to literature in his own play. Literature giveth and literature taketh away, and

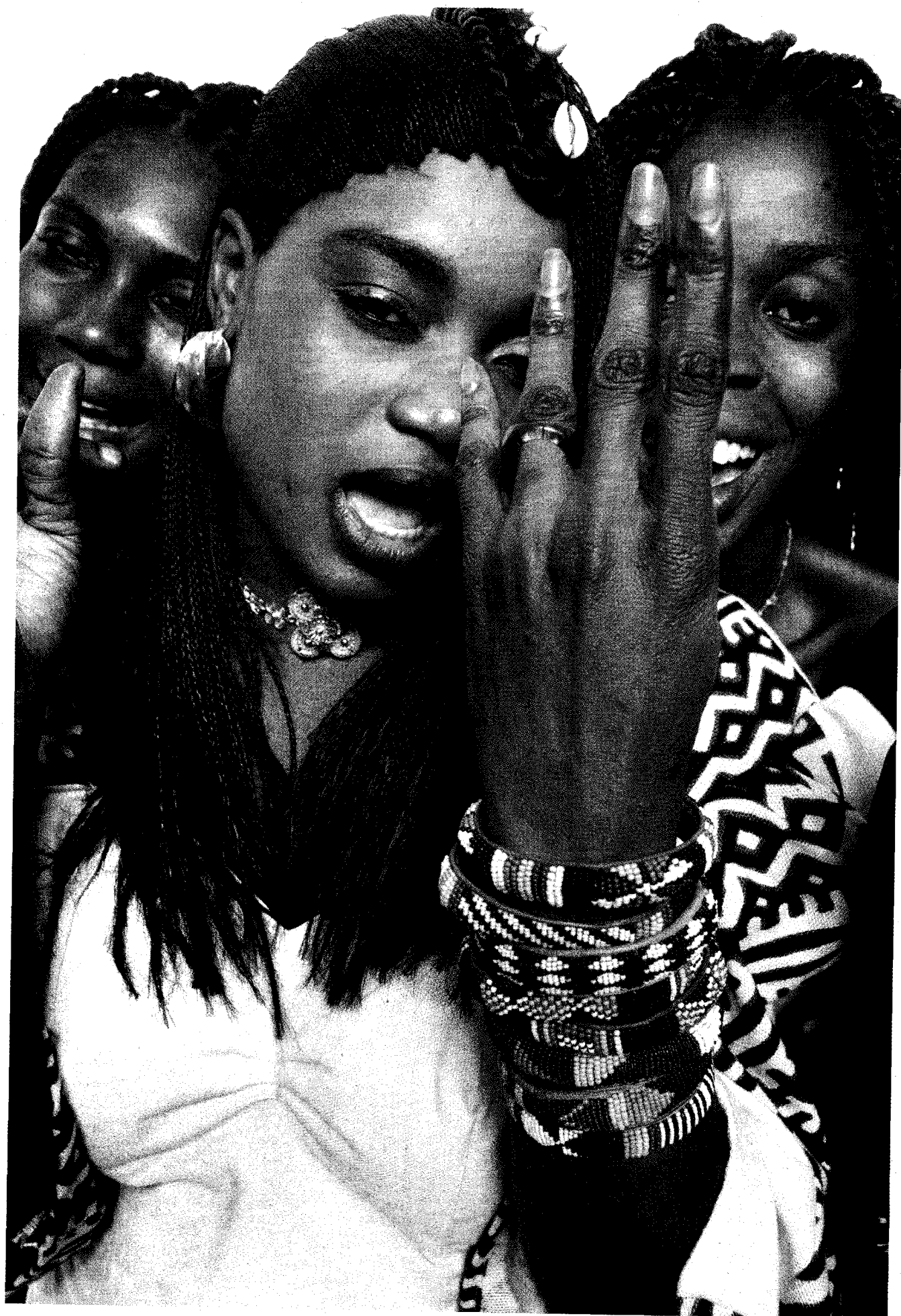
there is nothing outside this cycle. In fact, Gogol duped whole towns in 1835, not because Russia was a fictional world but because it was a fiction-believing world. This fiction-believing world appears in "Dead Souls": Chichikov propels himself on gusts of others' belief.

And it is a world that still exists in Russia. Three years ago, I found myself on a collective farm near Ryazan, about five hours from Moscow. A relative of mine was working for an international assistance project, helping Russians privatize their farms. A group of farmers and bureaucrats were crowded in an old woman's hut. It was dark; the woman sat in the corner and silently sewed a burlap sack. Moonlike icons, tilting from the rough walls, dimly suggested themselves. The farm's president was not there; he was in the hospital, sleeping off a benedict. Heads of families had been told that the greater the number of their dependents, the larger would be their government grants. People had been trying to claim dead family members as live ones. There was a brief discussion, and then the bureaucrats plugged a laptop computer into the chalky wall and took a swift electronic census of the available "souls." At that moment, my relative and I turned to each other as the dead Russians rose once more around us. ♦

OUT OF AFRICA

The thirty-year-old African singer Oumou Sangare (at right, with backup singers Alima Toure and Nabintou Diakite) is known as the Madonna of Mali, but, until recently, she has been all but unknown in this country. Sangare has just been named featured singer for the soundtrack of Oprah Winfrey and the director Jonathan Demme's film adaptation of Toni Morrison's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel "Beloved" (which opens on October 16th). Music fans who are curious about the sound that has earned Winfrey's gilded imprimatur can pick up "Worotan," Sangare's latest album, on WCD/Nonesuch. Backed by gently loping guitars, forlorn violin, and distant percussion, she lets loose in a serpentine voice so distinctive that it makes you wonder what took Oprah so long to find her.

Photograph by William Klein





THE THEATRE

BREAKING THE RULES

From the orphanage to the orchard and back.

BY JOHN LAHR

IN THE age of the sound bite and the sitcom, the hunger for narrative has emboldened the theatre to make a few epic departures from its usual "two-hour traffic." We've had the Royal Shakespeare Company's two-part "Nicholas Nickleby" (1980) and Tony Kushner's two-part "Angels in America" (1993); the latest saga is Peter Parnell's adroit two-part adaptation of John Irving's novel "The Cider House Rules," at the Mark Taper Forum, in Los Angeles—a project that has been in development since 1993 and is expertly directed by Tom Hulce and Jane Jones. Irving's favorite author is Charles Dickens, and, like Dickens's big-hearted tales, "The Cider House Rules," which ranges from the eighteen-eighties to the nineteen-fifties, teems with tragicomic characters, elaborate plots, and a mysterious but palpable sense of human goodness in the midst of grief. A phrase from "David Copperfield" echoes through the play as the orphan Homer Wells reads at bedtime to the other residents of St. Cloud's orphanage: "Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show." The question haunts Homer; it also keeps the audience engrossed for six hours as it waits to find out the answer.

The actors—twenty-two of them—take the stage to the sound of a

strolling fiddle player, and John Arnone's spare two-tiered set, whose brown-stained pine boards and variegated windows serve as a kind of abstraction of rural New England, suggests that Irving's world of loss and love will be called into being not by the power of spectacle but by the power of the imagination. The high spirits of Irving's prose are translated into a playful theatrical shorthand, which moves deftly between narrated description and direct dialogue. It's the theatrical correlative of the omniscient

narrator, designed for the panoramic view, not the closeup. At the opening, the two main characters—the obstetrician Dr. Larch (the compelling Michael Winter) and Homer (the subtle Josh Hamilton)—come together in one flourish as Homer tumbles from the open legs of his birth mother. While the nurses cradle an imaginary infant, Homer stands before us to help tell his own story.

ENTIRE COMPANY: Homer Wells!

HOMER: That's me.

LARCH: Nurse Edna,

NURSE EDNA: Who was in love,

LARCH: And Nurse Angela,

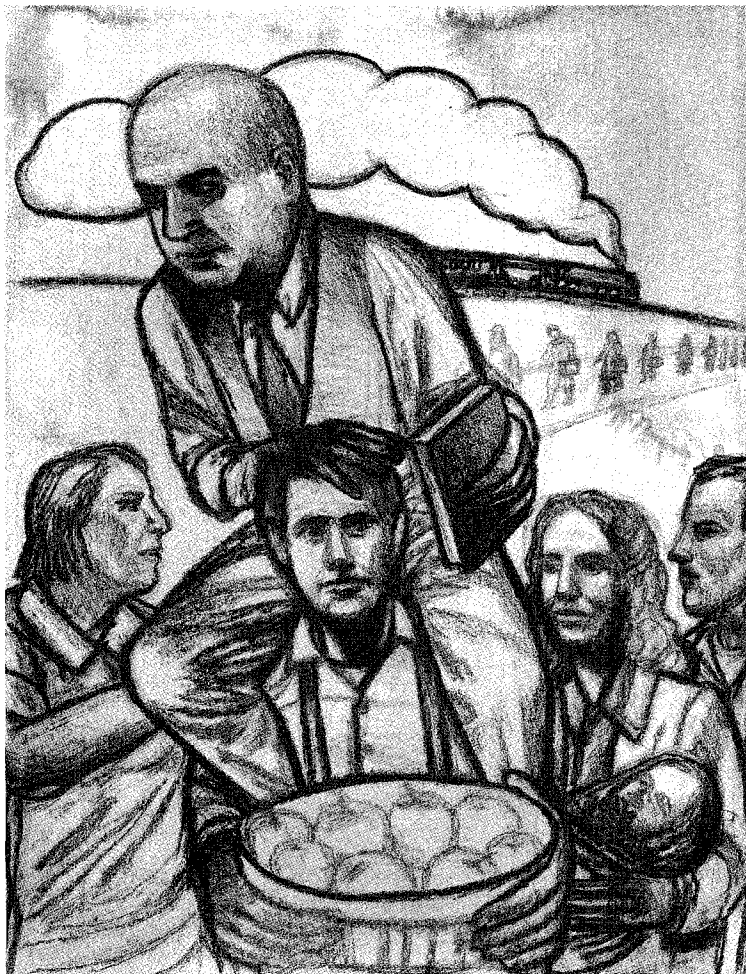
NURSE ANGELA: Who wasn't,

LARCH: Had no idea that the baby they were gazing so lovingly upon was eventually going to turn out to be the one and only true orphan, the boy who belonged to St. Cloud's.

Part I centers on the orphanage, in St. Cloud's, Maine, and on Larch's mission both to deliver children into the world and to abort them on demand—to do what he calls "the Lord's work." A celibate, ether-sniffing paterfamilias, Larch emerges like the tree his

name invokes—a tough, towering figure. Homer is Larch's "echo," "a thirteen-year-old disciple"; assisting Larch, he becomes so expert that one day, in Larch's absence, he actually delivers a baby. At another thrilling moment, Homer and Larch see their huge shadows projected by candlelight on the back wall. "Look! I'm a sorcerer!" Larch exclaims. Homer moves upstage, so that his image shrinks. "And I'm a sorcerer's apprentice," he says.

But the real theatrical magic of Part I is provided by St. Cloud's most difficult charge, a dervish of self-destruction called Melony (Jillian Armenante), who has the neck and thighs of a fullback and the chilling glower of a bully. Armenante—mooning Homer with her fat pink butt, bounding heavily into the aisles, leaping across the stage with athletic abandon—gives a definitive perfor-



A sorcerer and his apprentice: Michael Winters and Josh Hamilton as the abortion doctor and the orphan in the epic "Cider House Rules."

MARTIN GUNSAULUS

mance; she incarnates all the heartbreaking, murderous turmoil of adolescence. Melony is Homer's introduction to sex, skepticism, and rebellion. After he discovers that a fetus of eight weeks has an expression, he feels "the presence of what some call a soul": he refuses to perform another abortion. Larch, who lives close to the mysteries of life and death, now has to deal with the mysteries of love and separation, at which he is less accomplished. Homer has been befriended by a young gentleman farmer, Wally Worthington (Patrick Wilson), and his girlfriend, Candy Kendall (Myra Platt). "Little Miss Pretty wonders why she can't get pregnant. She doesn't know it's because you have to fuck first," Melony hectors, misreading their situation. They offer to take Homer, now a young man, away for a few days to the family apple orchard. Larch encourages the trip, but to insure Homer's return he writes to the Worthingtons about Homer's "defective heart." It's the first of many fictions, to be played out in Part II, that leave the audience, at the finale of Part I, feeling the weight of human destinies about to change. But the undercurrent of ambiguity, which is the narrative's accomplishment, is fumbled at the last beat: we have to settle for a clumsy stage picture of the new ménage à trois merely riding away from St. Cloud's on a grace note of fun.

Part II takes the yarn in a different direction, and it never quite achieves the dynamism of Part I. But the benefit of the two-part drama is that it allows multiple stories to be developed: there's time for you to actually live in several different worlds, as the characters do, and to ride out the inexplicable reversals of direction that time brings. Although Larch and Melony are patched in around the edges of Part II, the tale concentrates on Homer's adaptation to his new, affluent setting. He learns about apples, drive-ins, lobsters, and love. He loves Candy; she loves both him and Wally. When Wally joins the Air Force and is subsequently reported missing in action, she and Homer commit to each other, and she is soon pregnant. The moment when their son, Angel, is conceived is particularly well done. As handbills are passed out to the audience, Larch delivers a lecture on the common misuse of prophylactics: "When the penis is no longer erect, and when the man finally pulls his penis out of his partner, the prophylactic

can slide completely off." Homer looks down at himself. "Uh-oh," he says. In the meantime, Wally turns up, paralyzed but alive. Candy marries him; and for fifteen years Homer lives with them and treats Angel as his adopted son. He runs the estate and issues the Cider House rules—no drinking on the roof, no candles in bed, and so on—which are both insisted upon and broken.

What the characters' various deceptions dramatize is the human need to give lip service to convention, while we make up our own private set of values. The theme of storytelling—the fictions we invent for others and for ourselves in order to negotiate life—adds a layer of moral complication to the many plots. Larch, for example, invents an assistant, named Fuzzy Stone after a dead orphan, and finagles medical credentials for him to keep the local inspectors from interfering with his work. Angel's black girlfriend, who is pregnant at sixteen and has the quirky name of Rose Rose (Casey Lluberes), invents a story about her baby's father, who turns out to be her own father (Kevin Jackson). Even when she has stabbed him, the dying Mr. Rose asks to have his memory fictionalized. "You tell them I stabbed myself," he says to Homer. "That how you report it. . . . According to the rules."

Growth seems to occur in the transgression of these agreed-upon rules and fictions. Homer breaks his vow and performs an abortion on Rose; deception, which can be a source of evil, is shown in Homer to be a source of good. He assumes the identity of Fuzzy Stone and returns to St. Cloud's to do "the Lord's work." So, by imposture, Homer becomes a hero. In the novel, Irving calls attention to the irony of Homer's fictionalized self: "To Candy, a novelist was also what Homer Wells had become—for a novelist, in Candy's opinion, was also a kind of impostor doctor, but a good doctor nonetheless." The play could benefit from more clarity in this thematic area. But "The Cider House Rules," which the producers are planning to bring to New York next spring, is clear about the power of the humanity it chronicles. It ends on an elegiac note, with the dead Larch and his living incarnation, Fuzzy Stone, standing together. "There was no fault to be found in the hearts of either," Nurse Angela says. The same can be said of these rich, elegantly told tales. ♦

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- 8 ATT + ACHES
- 9 NEWS (anag.)
- 11 ISLET (anag.)
- 13 YPRES (hidden)
- 18 PEER (2 defs.)
- 19 END + ANGER
- 20 N + OODLES
- 21 STRESSED (rev.)

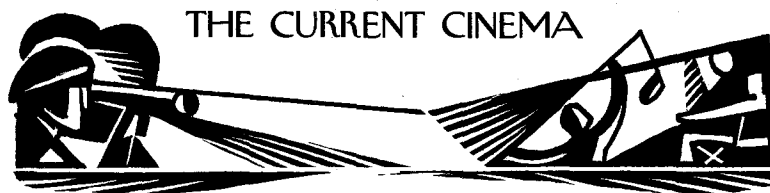
DOWN

- 1 SHANTY (*chantey* hom.)
- 2 W + ATE + R
- 3 AN + TWERP
- 4 SOCKS (2 defs.)
- 5 NIECE (*Nice* hom.)
- 6 G + ASP
- 10 AL(LEG)ES
- 12 TOR + RID (*rot* rev.)
- 14 PINOT (*to + nip* rev.)
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THE CURRENT CINEMA

DOWN FOR THE COUNT

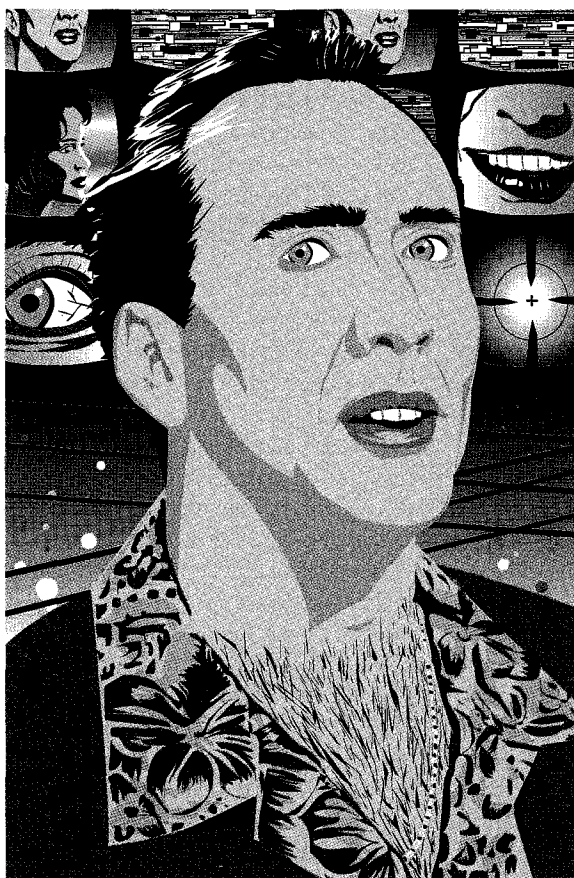
Boxing with the bad guys in De Palma's Atlantic City.

BY DAPHNE MERKIN

THE thing to fix your eye on as the truth keeps getting blurrier in Brian De Palma's "Snake Eyes" is the money. The cash in question is a bloodied wad of bills that is passed back and forth between various unsavory types and finally falls to the floor, begging to be noticed in case we have somehow failed to catch its glaring significance earlier. The film is full of insistent symbolism, black-and-white contrasts designed to lead the audience: corruption versus innocence, friends versus users, innate class versus too much gold jewelry. De Palma has always been a fairly cynical moviemaker: he's been accused of overindulging in violence, specifically against female characters, but the truth is that what he's become most cynical about is his viewers. He underrates our intelligence, and as a result you know as you're watching this film how things will turn out—which makes for an oddly unsuspenseful thriller. The only halfhearted surprise is the sweetness of the ending, but do I sound too cynical myself if I say that it's unconvincing coming from a guy whose idea of romance seems stuck back in a high-school locker room where good girls don't put out?

"Snake Eyes" is set in Atlantic City, on the eve of a heavyweight boxing match. (This former beach town has become a cinematic *idée fixe*—the shabby yet magical place immortalized by Louis Malle, rich with unseen beauty and unlikely heroes.) Rick Santoro (Nicolas Cage) is a local police detective; he's loud and chummy and spends a large part of the movie wearing a necklace and a hideous shirt (I kept trying to figure out whether its lurid yellow, brown, and black colors qualified it as a Hawaiian print or brought it to another fashion-victim level altogether), which is unbuttoned to reveal a King Kong-hairy chest. Santoro emits a high-voltage intensity,

but whether it's his own or Cage's is hard to tell: his cell phone rings constantly with calls from his wife, Angela, who's "fat, fantastic, I love her," and his girlfriend, Monique—"skinny, mean, expensive, I love her." He places bets and collects bribes, beats up sleazeballs who hold out on him, and schmoozes the right



Schmoozer with a cell phone: Nicolas Cage as the cynical police detective in "Snake Eyes."

people. "This isn't a beach town," he declares. "It's a sewer." And then, pausing a beat: "It's my sewer—I am the king."

It's a stormy night, a hurricane is brewing, and fourteen thousand fans have come to town to see Lincoln Tyler (Stan Shaw), also known as "the Executioner," the hometown champion and the fa-

vorite to win the fight. Among them is the Secretary of Defense (Joel Fabiani), whose security is being overseen by Santoro's old buddy, Navy Commander Kevin Dunne (Gary Sinise). Santoro looks up to his clean-cut, powerful friend, and Dunne, in turn, thinks he has Santoro's number. "You don't get out of bed unless there's something in it for you," he says. Quicker than you can lay bets on Linc, and just when Dunne has absented himself to check out an inexplicably suspicious-looking redhead with a ringside seat, the Secretary is assassinated. Seconds before he keels back, his throat gurgling blood, a bespectacled young woman (Carla Gugino) in a white suit and an obvious blond wig (shades of "Dressed to Kill" and self-homage) slips into Dunne's seat to give the Secretary an urgent message. She is shot in the

arm but manages to escape, without her wig and glasses, into the ladies' room, where she deftly but myopically bandages her wound and washes the blood out of her jacket. (I did wonder how, in a sealed-off building with fourteen thousand people, she'd find herself alone in the bathroom for more than a second; and why hasn't she heard of contact lenses?) Santoro, for his part, thinks he has seen everything clearly, including the fact that Linc has thrown the fight, and that Dunne has gunned down the assassin (who turns out to be a Palestinian enraged at the sale of missiles to Israel: nothing like a little Middle East conflict to make a thriller seem truly international in its implications).

Now the real action commences, lest you thought the plot sounded

anemic. What appears to be Santoro's moment of glory—as he steps in to help his friend cover up the fact that he left the Secretary unguarded, and orders the police to search for the bewigged brunette—proves to be his hour of reckoning. He counsels Dunne on how to spin the situation so as to come out

PETER STEWART

ahead: "It isn't lying; you just tell them what you did right, and leave out the rest." But Santoro himself is lost in the mists of the rapidly shifting story. It is Columbo meets Rashomon: nothing is as it seems, no one is who he appears to be, and Santoro stumbles into a conspiracy involving everyone from Linc to a defense contractor (John Heard), who doesn't want a few kinks in his lucrative air-guard missile system to go beyond the conscientious young woman who noticed them in the first place. Santoro has to decide whether he will put the welfare of this woman—and his country—before his own interests or stay true to his sellout nature. "How much will it have to take for you to look the other way, like you have all your life?" Dunne sneers. Amid thunder and lightning, and with the help of an ingenious state-of-the-art computer that can track an entire casino, "Snake Eyes" metes out its own form of technologically enhanced cowboy justice. Santoro, who whimpers, "I never killed nobody," and then, after Dunne's men beat him up, staggers down a long tunnel with a bruised and bloodied face, turns out to be the noble savage we were all betting he'd be. In the film's last-minute burst of sentimentality, he even has the love of the woman he has saved thrust upon him, although it means that she'll have to wait until he serves time for his crooked career. "I'm naïve," she says in the guileless way of gorgeous ballistics researchers everywhere. To which Santoro replies, "There are worse things to be."

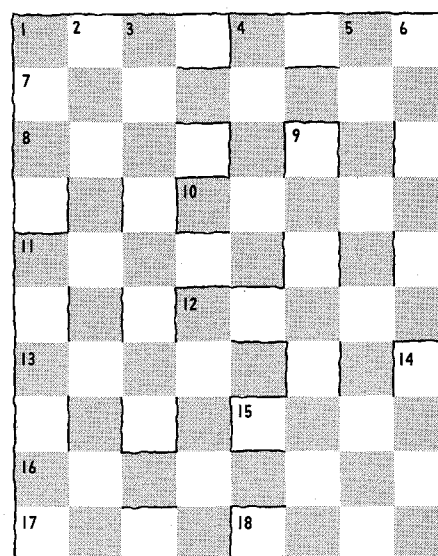
In spite of its noirish glow and the shivery (if hardly new) idea that the really bad guys are running the country while the less bad ones are running Atlantic City, "Snake Eyes" isn't scary: it lacks psychological tension, or any sense that there's something at stake other than the promptings of the script. The movie is based on a story co-written by De Palma and David Koepp, and you can feel that story hovering over the screen, trying to breathe human life into De Palma's vaunted technique—his long steadicam shots, tight editing, and Hitchcockian use of voyeuristic camera angles and tall shadows. He is the kind of director who works his movies out beforehand, down to the last frame, and that scientific quality of preparation is apparent in the pacing of the film. The camera seems to cling like Saran

Wrap—to attach itself to whatever is on the other side of the lens and suck it up in a way it doesn't do for anyone else. But there has always been an icy nullity behind De Palma's technique, an inability to express emotional subtlety. He's good at the nether end of the spectrum, at hostility and revenge; the unspoken adolescent fascination with menstrual blood that drips all over "Carrie," smearing the prom-queen image, is so powerfully evoked that it gives one pause. He seems to be getting at some essential sexual unease: Do men ever move beyond seeing women like this, or do they only pretend to? And De Palma, with his movie-bred, synthetic imagination, understands the sheer visual impact of brutality: "Scarface" was mean and ugly and one-dimensional, but it was riveting to watch.

Still, I've never discerned the Grand Guignol humorist that some critics have seen in him—the director who enjoys a cackle at all our poor fantasies while sending up one minor cinematic genre after another. The problem with cynics as seasoned as De Palma is that they don't believe there's anything new to learn; he's like one of those crabby, seen-it-all cabdrivers who have stopped taking in the world—and the people in it—long ago. It's no surprise that women have never interested De Palma much, even less than they've interested Scorsese and Lucas: with the exception of Nancy Allen (whom he was once married to), they've mostly been broads—pretty distractions with boobs. This time, he's given us a female character who is both comely and brainy, but since she's required to act like a hooker for her survival it's hard to switch gears and accept her as a gentle genius. Cage, who continues to throw away his talent—to over-emote and yell at the top of his lungs when he's not staring at someone with his hypnotically wide-eyed gaze—doesn't help matters. His Santoro doesn't seem capable of responding to anything beyond a babe at the other end of a cellular; I didn't care, finally, whether he showed flashes of integrity. I was more taken by Dunne, whom Sinise invests with a quiet malevolence. In some ways, "Snake Eyes" represents a kinder, gentler De Palma—one who's newly open to the possibility that there really are worse things in life to be than naïve. If only I believed he believed it. ♦

8x10 CRYPTIC

NO. 55 BY FRASER SIMPSON



ACROSS

- 1 False god destroyed a lab (4)
- 4 Guy's partner at a party (4)
- 7 Second-rate judge makes a case for South American city (8)
- 8 Preminger having it both ways? (4)
- 10 Cash fare that's hard to stomach (5)
- 11 St-strange play (5)
- 12 True sports stuff, say (5)
- 13 Bank hosts a kind of race (5)
- 15 Leather mask (4)
- 16 Find 500 is 100 extra (8)
- 17 Return in the chopper (4)
- 18 Put down wrench, as told (4)

DOWN

- 1 So I initially back up nonfiction works (4)
- 2 Opposite the Titanic, swimming (10)
- 3 Nevertheless fear tall drunk (5,3)
- 4 Newlywed suite is under \$1,000 (5)
- 5 Angular measurements singled out for a change (10)
- 6 A nouveau riche bigot on TV (6)
- 9 Healing parish priest with I.V. inserted (8)
- 11 Dorset eccentric took steps (6)
- 12 Some citizens accosted an Italian anarchist (5)
- 14 Each time rather saucy (4)

The solution to puzzle No. 54 appears on page 81. For a free copy of "The New Yorker's Guide to Solving Cryptic Crosswords," please send your fax number or a stamped, self-addressed envelope to "Solvers' Guide," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. For an electronic version, send an E-mail to puzzleguide@newyorker.com.



SHOUTS & MURMURS

TALKING POINTS

BY ANDY BOROWITZ

"Maybe there'll be a simple, innocent explanation, [but] I don't think so, because I think we would have offered that up already."

—White House Press Secretary Mike McCurry.

To: POTUS

Re: Some thoughts for August 17th

1. During government shutdown resulting from budget impasse, Oval Office ran out of pens. Ms. Lewinsky offered to lend you hers. To repay her, you gave her "Mousehunt" Pez dispenser given to you by David Geffen. You recall her saying that she already had a "Mousehunt" Pez dispenser, given to her by Jeffrey Katzenberg. You took back Pez dispenser and gave her "Leaves of Grass," by Walt Whitman.

She gave you "Private Lives of the Three Tenors," by her mom. You gave her a hatpin, she gave you a tie, and you gave her a midnight-blue cocktail dress.

2. To celebrate hard work of White House interns subbing during the government shutdown, you invited them all out to dinner. All of them, with the exception of Ms. Lewinsky, elected to wash hair instead.

3. You recall that you and Ms. Lewinsky dined at Bombay Kitchen restaurant. You ordered saag paneer, chicken vindaloo, rogan josh, raita, naan, and a large Kingfisher. Waiter

spilled chutney on midnight-blue cocktail dress.

4. During dinner, you recall that Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Jordan were seated in the next booth, eating tandoori shrimp and lamb biryani. After a round of in-



troductions, Ms. Lewinsky asked Mrs. Jordan if she was wearing a shade of nail polish called BrazenBerry. Mrs. Jordan confirmed that, in fact, that was the nail-polish shade in question. You recall Vernon Jordan remarking, "That young lady should be working at Revlon."

5. After dinner, you and Ms. Lewinsky stopped at Kramerbooks in Dupont Circle. You bought replacement copy of "Leaves of Grass," while Ms. Lewinsky bought "The Babysitters' Club: The Haunted Hideout." At the espresso bar, Ms. Lewinsky ordered gourmet coffee beverage. Clerk accidentally squirted vanilla syrup on midnight-blue cocktail dress.

6. In limo on the way home, Ms. Lewinsky opened Kramerbooks bag and realized that in the commotion she picked up the wrong one, containing not "The Babysitters' Club" but "Vox," a book about phone sex. You expressed your concern about issue of explicit sexual content on the

Internet, etc., and its effect on America's morals as we build a bridge to the twenty-first century. Sharing your concerns, Ms. Lewinsky offered to read the book, then call you to brief you on its most offensive passages.

7. You now think it is entirely possible that the limo broke down. You recall saying you know nothing about fixing cars. Ms. Lewinsky

replied that she got an A in auto shop at Beverly Hills High. Ms. Lewinsky crawled under car, repaired transmission with hatpin, but coolant dripped on midnight-blue cocktail dress.

8. You realized it was almost past the 10 P.M. curfew for White House interns. You recall telling driver to "step on it." Driver made wide left turn, crashed into oncoming tanker truck headed for sperm bank. Ms. Lewinsky, Secret Service agents, limo driver, and sperm-truck driver all bumped heads, got amnesia, like on "Gilligan's Island" episode you once saw. Before blacking out, you recall seeing logo on side of tanker and saying, "That's my bank." ♦

MICHAEL CRAWFORD



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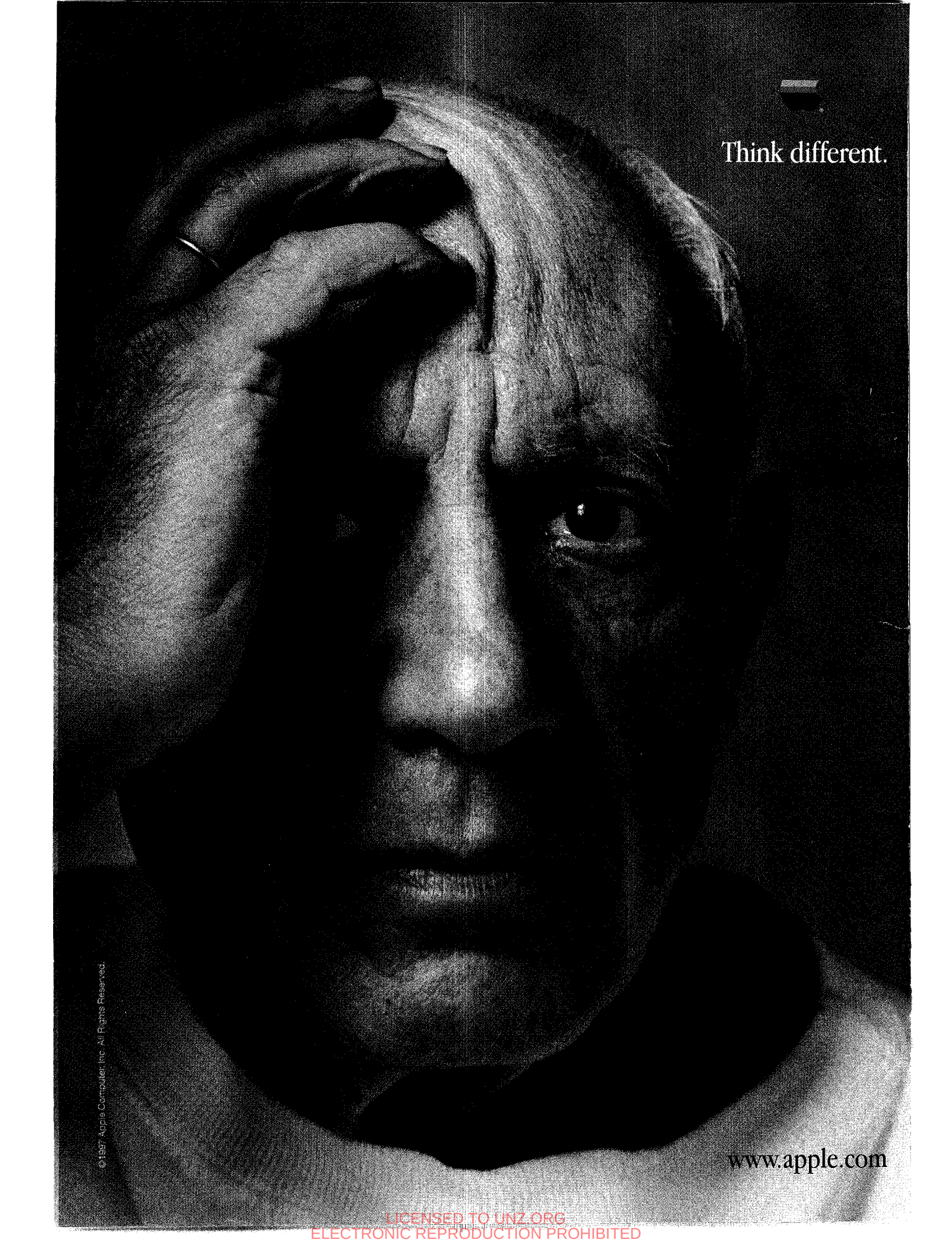
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